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NATIONAL
ANTI-CONVICT-CONTRACT
ASSOCIATION.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
NATIONAL CONVENTION,

HELD AT

CHICAGO, AUGUST 26th, 1886.

TOGETHER WITH OTHER INTERESTING MATTER RELATING TO

CONVICT-CONTRACT LABOR.

EDITED BY

PROF. L. D. MANSFIELD, M. A.,

ASSISTANT SECRETARY.

CHICAGO:

PUBLISHED BY THE ASSOCIATION.

HOME INSURANCE BUILDING,

1886.

1896
OFFICERS

National Anti-Convict-Contract Association.

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V.-President MITCHELL & LEWIS WAGON Co., of Racine, Wis.

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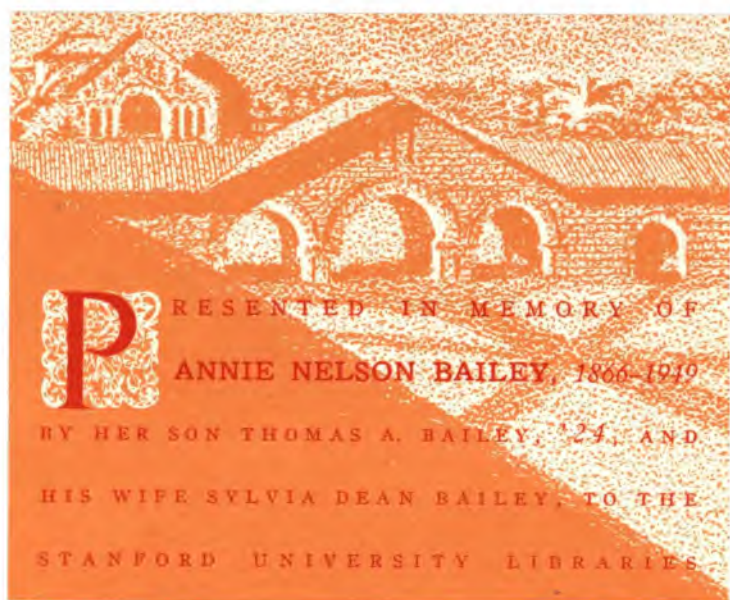
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~~National Anti Convict Contract Association~~



National Anti-Convict-Contract Association.

PRESIDENT: W. T. LEWIS, OF RACINE.

1ST V. PRESIDENT: CHRISTOPH HOTZ, OF CHICAGO.

SECRETARY: GEO. S. REDFIELD, OF CHICAGO.

Secretary's Office:

Home Insurance Building.

Chicago, Dec. 1st, 1886.

IN presenting to manufacturers, workingmen, legislators, and to the general public, the proceedings of the Anti-Convict-Contract Convention, and the Constitution and By-Laws adopted by the National Organization, it seems proper to make some introductory remarks.

The evil which this Association seeks to combat is not an imaginary one, nor yet one of small significance; but an incubus which has weighed heavily upon the industrial interests of the country for years. It has elicited no little discussion on the part of political economists and manufacturers, as involving the interests of both capital and labor. It has engaged the attention, and induced the action, of the legislatures of several of our largest and most important States—New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and California being already arrayed against the convict-contract system.

It is the aim of this Association to secure in all the States, and by the National Government, the same wise and equitable legislative measures in regard to convict-contract labor which have been

adopted by these States, and to secure such an exhaustive examination of the whole question as to effect a practical solution of the difficult problem, viz.:

"What shall be done with the convicts of our prisons and penitentiaries?"

That they must work, and not be kept in idleness, seems to be conceded on all hands. The terms of their sentence—"to hard labor"; the health and discipline of the prisoners; the necessity of their earning, at least, the principal part of their own support, and not be maintained by the tax-payer, all demand that the convict shall not be kept in idleness. This point may then be considered as settled, and should be eliminated from the problem.

The two principal questions to be considered, are: First, the evils which flow from the convict-contract system; Second, the remedy for those evils which shall bear the least on the industrial public.

Both these points will be found to have been most ably discussed in this Convention by business men, as well as by political economists,—men of large affairs and of comprehensive views,—to whose utterances the reader is referred. The Convention was not composed of utopian theorizers and doctrinaires, or of political demagogues, but of practical, thoughtful men, representing some of the largest manufacturing companies in the country, in many different lines of business, millions of invested capital, and the interests of tens of thousands of operatives.

Notwithstanding these well-known facts, a New York iron trade journal, which derives its principal support from manufacturers, has seen fit to say, referring to this Convention:

"Most of the anti-contract agitation of the past few years has been pure demagoguery, and those who have been misled by it are ignorant people who do not reason closely, and who are ever ready to follow any hue and cry that may be raised."

The list of well-known and honorable names of those taking part in the Convention is a sufficient answer to this aspersion.

The facts which are hereinafter submitted show conclusively that convict labor, which is sold to the contractor for an average of not more than fifty cents per day, is a disturbing element in the labor market, and in lowering the values of articles produced

by free industry; both reducing the price of labor—thus defrauding the free artisan of the rewards of his toil,—and the price of the manufactured article,—thus depriving the manufacturer of the full value of his goods.

Thus the State antagonizes the interests of its free citizens—both capitalists and working people—by selling the cheap labor of the criminal classes at a price which forbids successful competition. It must be obvious, that the legitimate manufacturer cannot pay three or four times as much as the prison contractor for his labor, and sell at the same price. The logical result is, that in order to continue his business, the manufacturer must cut down the wages of his workmen. Under this enforced reduction of wages workmen become restive and dissatisfied; strikes and hostility to capitalists are provoked; the whole framework of society is disturbed and the public peace jeopardized.

Convict-contract labor does not extend to all branches of business, but the derangement of values in these is not confined to those immediately affected, but extends sympathetically to all other branches of business, and so the element of convict-contract labor becomes a wide-spread disturbing force.

It has been noticed, in the labor troubles which have recently prevailed, how strikes in one department of labor produce strikes in others, and how all forms of skilled industry are so intertwined by the organization of the Knights of Labor, that all kinds of skilled industry sympathize and co-operate.

How much of the dissatisfaction of wage-workers is due to the injection into our free industries of this prison-labor element, it is difficult to say, but that it has wrought no inconsiderable part of the mischief scarcely admits of a doubt.

It is alleged that the amount of convict-contract labor is so small, compared with the aggregate amount of free labor employed in the same industries, that it cannot possibly affect the price of products or of free labor. Before submitting the facts, which show, that both products and labor are cheapened, by this miasmatic influence, below the point of proper remuneration to the workman and of profit to the employer, it should be considered that markets are made to rise and fall,—not by the aggregate holdings of all,—but by the prices consented to by some.

On the stock Exchange, or at the Board of Trade, the necessity of some "to realize," frequently depresses the market, and compels others to sell at a ruinous loss. The same principle rules in regard to manufactured articles produced by convict-contract labor. Lines of certain goods—such as shoes, chairs, furniture, metallic-goods, cooperage, etc.,—are thrust upon the market at a low price sufficient to depress values below the point of reasonable compensation, and the fact that prison contractors have not enough of the articles in question to supply the whole market, plays no part in the matter. The convicts produce enough to make a price, and that is all that is necessary, in order to disturb values and inflict great injury both upon the manufacturer and upon his workmen.

But more convincing than anything we can say on this point is an array of facts contained in the forthcoming report of the ILLINOIS BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, from the advance sheets of which we are permitted to copy the following testimonials as to THE EFFECT OF THE CONTRACT SYSTEM ON FREE LABOR:

COOPERAGE.

"The president of a wealthy cooperage company doing business in all parts of the country offers this testimony upon the subject: "The manufacture of lard tierces and pork barrels in prison by machinery, in the various States, has virtually given the complete control of the markets for provision cooperage into their hands. They manufacture more than half of that which is used in the States of Ohio and Illinois. Whenever there is a stiffening in the demand, then the prison cooperage sells at the same price as that of free manufacture. The manufacture of cooperage inside prison walls should be restricted to exclusively hand work. By this means the convict would be taught a trade, the production would be reduced, and the State would not suffer.

"The greatest evil of the present system is, that at certain seasons of the year, and, I believe, at all seasons of the year in Chicago, it brings the level of wages that coopers earn working at provision cooperage

BELOW THAT OF A COMMON LABORER.

In our works, it has virtually compelled us to abandon the manufacture of provision cooperage. It is not, however, over one per cent. of our entire product. Twelve or fifteen years ago, we could safely count on putting a large percentage of our coopers, during the dull season, on this class of work, and, at least, get our money back, and often stand a chance of a good round profit: now we are

COMPELLED TO DISMISS THEM,

and let them hunt other employment.

"The use of cooperage machinery in the prison has divided the labor, so that now a convict learns only a trifling part of the trade; and he is no more of a cooper when he is released than he is a tailor. Cooperage stock should, in my opinion, go into the prison just as it leaves the tree, and all labor upon it should be done by hand.

No convict should be allowed to work more than six months at any one part of the work. This would insure him a trade, and a chance to earn his living when released.'

"A Chicago manufacturer of cooperage, with many years' experience in that market, gives this emphatic testimony as to the consequences of the contract system:

"The competition of prison-made goods in our market has caused such a decline in prices that we estimate present rates to be

FROM 25 TO 40 PER CENT. LOWER

than they would be if the convict contractors did not force their goods upon the market. The large amount of cooperage manufactured at Joliet has also very much

REDUCED THE HOME DEMAND,

and as it is virtually impossible to ship cooperage, on account of its bulk and the freight charges upon it, we are practically at the mercy of the prison contractors.

"This impairment of the demand and the price for our goods has made it necessary to reduce the wages of our employes to such an extent that, although they are skilled workmen, it pays them better to work when they can as laborers on the streets. The quality of prison-made goods is not generally equal to that of private manufacturers, and purchasers know it; but as we must sell in this market; they also know they will get our goods at prison prices if they wait long enough.

"In the last ten years half the cooperage establishments in this city

HAVE GONE OUT OF BUSINESS,

and the remainder have been compelled to discharge about half their employes. The influence of convict-contract labor in our business, owing to the enormous quantities of goods made and forced upon the market at any price attainable, is so demoralizing that in the last ten years it has

RUINED THE PROSPECTS OF EVERY ONE

concerned in that industry. It has forced employers out of business, long hours, hard work, and starvation wages upon employes, and injured all kinds of manufacturers of the raw material throughout the State.'

BOOTS AND SHOES.

"The president of one of the oldest and largest boot and shoe establishments in Chicago, or the country, having an invested capital of over a quarter of a million dollars, makes the following statement, based upon the observation and experience of his firm for many years, in regard to the influence of convict labor upon their business:

"Prison labor in the manufacture of boots and shoes has depressed the prices of those goods at least 20 per cent.

THE WAGES OF OUR MEN ARE MUCH LOWER

than they were before the prison contracts were given, and I ascribe the lower wages entirely to the competition arising from convict labor. The quality of prison-made goods is equal to that of private enterprises. Manufacturers can not make goods and sell them at the same price with prison-made goods at a profit. There are fewer factories in Chicago to-day, making boots and shoes, than there were years ago, owing to the establishment of the prison shops. Some who did manufacture here have been obliged to take prison contracts in order to compete with others who had them, and have consequently closed their factories here. *Free labor can not compete with prison labor.*

"Another firm engaged in the manufacture of

WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S FINE SHOES

replied to our inquiries, that

“‘ Prison-made goods undoubtedly have a depressing effect upon prices in our line of goods but we cannot say how much.

WAGES OF LABOR

have from time to time been reduced to meet the competition from this source. The quality of some grades of shoes made in prison is as good as any, but very fine shoes can not be made by convicts. The influence of the present system of prison labor, in our judgment, is to cut down the prices of goods, enrich a few contractors, and lower the wages of workingmen.’

“The representative of a

SHOE AND SLIPPER FACTORY IN CHICAGO

says: ‘There has undoubtedly been a decline in prices, owing to convict labor, which I should estimate as about ten per cent., and a considerable falling off in demand. The same influence has also

EFFECTED A REDUCTION IN WAGES

of at least ten per cent. Owing to the use of machinery the quality of prison goods is nearly, if not quite, as good as that of private manufacture. The system gives capital greater power, and tends to discourage labor.’

A MASTER MARBLE-WORKER SAYS:

‘Even when there is plenty of work being done in our line we have been obliged to run on short time, which is equivalent to paying only partial wages, because the bulk of the business was secured by the prison contractors below our lowest rates. In this way honest men are robbed of work and wages.

“‘ Some five or six years ago, competition in my line was not at all as active as now. My only competitors were local business men, who, like myself, were employers of free labor. Then there was no occasion for cutting down the wages of my men.

THEY RECEIVED A FAIR COMPENSATION

for a comparatively easy day’s work, and the employer was able to realize a legitimate profit. Very soon, however, Eastern prison contractors found their way out here, and began to bid for the furniture-top trade, which constitutes a leading branch of my business. In order to get the work from the established houses here, they had to make prices below myself and others, and they

DID IT WITH A VENGEANCE,

and continue to do it whenever an opportunity arises. The same thing may be said of prison contractors in Illinois. They attack us in the same way exactly, though on a different line of goods. The Illinois contractors interfere with us in building work, such as mantels, tiling, and wainscoating. As a consequence, the wages of men and the profits of the business are cut on all sides in the interest of convicts and contractors.

“‘ The class of marble work now turned out of our prisons, while it can not be said to be as well executed as that from free-labor shops, is yet good enough to meet the demand of the great mass of people. The prison men give us trouble mainly in the manufacture of plain work, or that which is easily done. It is principally what is known as flat work, and they can find a market for their goods nearly or quite as readily as we can, and can turn out any amount of that kind of work with convicts.

IT IS A DISGRACE AND A CRIME TO ALLOW JAIL-BIRDS TO PREVENT HONEST MEN
FROM MAKING A LIVING,

but that is really the effect of our present contracting system in our public prisons. I

trust the time is not far distant when this discouraging and oppressive system shall be forever abolished.'

"Another operator in

STONE AND MARBLE WORK SAYS:

" 'It is utterly impossible for outside dealers to compete with the prison contractors, for the reason that they have established such a low price for marble and granite work. Unless we could find customers who are opposed to prison labor, we could not sell one foot of these goods.' "

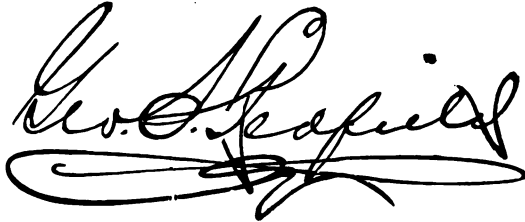
These facts speak for themselves, and vindicate fully the views expressed by this Association, and the propriety of organizing to combat the evils of the contract system. We hope to enlist in the war against this gross abuse of our punitive system all the MANUFACTURERS of the country and all the LABOR ORGANIZATIONS; and ask them to forward to the Treasurer of this Association their names and the MEMBERSHIP FEES fixed upon, that the war may be carried on vigorously, until the wrong is redressed, and 'till the contract system shall be banished from every State of this Nation.

We shall not, in this place, attempt to solve the problem

"What shall be done with the convicts in our prisons"?

The reader will find many valuable suggestions in the several papers which follow, and we doubt not that some of them, or others that will yet be made, will furnish a working answer to the question.

Yours respectfully,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "G. O. Seaford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end.

Secretary.

MEMBERSHIP
—IN THE—
NATIONAL ANTI-CONVICT-CONTRACT ASSOCIATION,

The National Convention, as will be seen by reference to the proceedings hereinafter given, adopted a schedule for annual membership fees, for the purpose of defraying the incidental expenses of the Association.

By direction of the Executive Committee it was determined—

First—That a central office for the Association should be established in Chicago, with an Assistant Secretary, and such other assistants as the Secretary may deem necessary.

Second—That a circular letter be sent to all the principal manufacturers in the country interested in the subject of Convict Labor. This is now being done as fast as practicable.

Third—To publish in pamphlet form the proceedings of the Convention, with such other interesting matter as might be thought wise.

Fourth—To send representatives of this Association to the State and National Legislatures, with the object of securing the enactment of proper laws forbidding Convict-Contract Labor.

The fees of members are at present the only provision made to meet the necessary expenses. They are as follows:

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES.

FOR MANUFACTURERS,

with right of one vote to each manufacturing institution, \$10.00.

FOR MERCHANTS AND PROFESSIONAL MEN,

with right of one vote for each firm or company represented, \$5.00.

FOR LABOR ORGANIZATIONS,

to be represented with one delegate for each organization, and each to be entitled to one vote, \$5.00.

FOR WORKINGMEN, AND ALL OTHERS INTERESTED,

entitling each member to a seat in Convention, and to have one vote, 50 cents.

It is hoped that representatives of all these classes so deeply interested in the objects of this Association, will promptly enroll their names as members, and forward their annual dues.

All remittances should be addressed to

Mr. GEO. S. REDFIELD, *Treasurer*,
National Anti-Convict-Contract Association,
Home Insurance Building, CHICAGO.

PROCEEDINGS
—OF THE—
NATIONAL CONVENTION, OF AUGUST 26TH., 1886.

MORNING SESSION.

Pursuant to a call issued by Mr. W. T. LEWIS, of Racine, Wisconsin, a meeting of manufacturers and others was held at the Grand Pacific Hotel, Chicago, August 26th., 1886, to consider, and if possible to adopt measures to correct, the evils now inflicted upon the industries of the country by the convict-contract system, which prevails in many of the States of the Union.

Among those present, and taking part in the proceedings, were:

CLEMENT STUDEBAKER, President of CARRIAGE BUILDERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, and also of the Studebaker Brothers' Manufacturing Company, of South Bend, Ind.

J. M. STUDEBAKER, Vice-President of Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company, Wagon Manufacturers, of South Bend, Ind.

P. E. STUDEBAKER, Treasurer of Studebaker Brothers Manufacturing Company, Wagon Manufacturers, of Chicago.

MORRIS ROSENFELD, President of Moline Wagon Company, of Moline, Ill.

CHRISTOPH HOTZ, of Schuttler & Hotz Wagon Works, of Chicago.

W. T. LEWIS, of Mitchell & Lewis Co., of Racine, Wis.

A. J. WEBSTER, Manufacturer of Hubs and Spokes, Menasha, Wis.

F. J. UPTON, President of Star Wagon Co., of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

C. H. DEERE, President of Jno. Deere Plow Company, of Moline, Ill.

N. S. KETCHUM, President of Ketchum Wagon Company, of Marshalltown, Iowa.

W. C. NONES, General Manager of Kentucky Wagon Manufacturing Company, of Louisville, Ky.

J. H. WHITING, General Manager of Flint Wagon Works, of Flint, Mich.

FRANK SLOSSON, of the Bain Wagon Company, of Kenosha, Wis.

D. J. MOREY, Chicago Manager of Racine Wagon and Carriage Co., of Chicago.

GEO. S. REDFIELD, Vice-President of National Tubular Axle Co., of Chicago.

JNO. M. DRIVER, Manufacturer of Sash and Doors, of Racine, Wis.

J. C. BIRGE, President of Seymour Manufacturing Co., Manufacturers of Scythe-Snaths and Spokes, of St. Louis, Mo.

MATTHEW J. SIMPELAAR, Deputy State Commissioner of Labor and Industrial Statistics, of Milwaukee, Wis.

W. K. HOAGLAND, of Peru Plow Co., of Peru, Ill.

- L. L. TABOR, of Kalamazoo Knitting Works, Milwaukee, Wis.
 H. E. REDMOND, of Champaign, Ill.
 A. E. DUKE, of Indiana Manufacturing Company, of Peru, Ind.
 F. S. NEWELL, Secretary of Bain Wagon Company, of Kenosha, Wis.
 F. W. STARBUCK, Printer, of Racine, Wis.
 C. H. MOORE, Secretary of La Belle Wagon Works, of Fond du Lac, Wis.
 Prof. A. O. WRIGHT, Secretary of State Board of Charities and Reform, of Madison, Wis.
 M. KAPPEL, Wagon Manufacturer, of Red Wing, Minn.
 J. W. HINTON, President of North-Western Tariff Bureau, of Milwaukee, Wis.
 H. M. KINNEY, General Manager of Winona Wagon Co., of Winona, Minn.
 FRANK A. FLOWER, Commissioner of Wisconsin Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics, of Madison, Wis.
 J. P. ADAMS, of Sandwich Manufacturing Company, Manufacturer of Agricultural Implements, of Sandwich, Ill.
 A. COQUILLARD, Wagon Manufacturer, of South Bend, Ind.
 JOSEPH MILLER, of J. Miller & Co., Manufacturers of Boots and Shoes, of Racine, Wis.
 C. H. LEE, of The J. I. Case Threshing Machine Company, of Racine, Wis.
 Hon. JONATHAN PERINE, Associate Editor of "Farm, Field and Stockman," of Chicago.
 T. C. LUND, of T. G. Mandt Manufacturing Company, Wagon Manufacturer, of Stoughton, Wis.

The meeting being called to order, Mr. W. T. LEWIS, of Racine, was chosen Chairman, and Mr. H. M. KINNEY, of Winona, made Secretary, *pro tem*.

On motion of Mr. ROSENFELD, of Moline, the Chairman was requested to read the letter calling the meeting.

The following letter was read by Chairman LEWIS:

"GENTLEMEN:—Will you join with others in convention, to be held in the parlors of the Grand Pacific Hotel, Chicago, at 11 o'clock A. M., Thursday, August 26th., 1886, to consider convict labor, its rapid increase in producing different articles, thereby seriously interfering with independent labor; the best method of disposing of this class, to secure an equal distribution of its burdens upon all tax-payers, as the present method places the bulk upon a small portion of independent labor. Please invite other manufacturers of your city to attend. WILL YOU COME? An early reply will confer a favor.

"Yours very respectfully,

"W. T. LEWIS."

The CHAIRMAN also read the following circular letter, which he had addressed to the Secretaries of the States and Territories of the United States, relative to convict labor:

"To the Secretary of State: DEAR SIR—It is desirable to know the condition of convict labor, and whether it interferes with independent labor, in your State. If so,

to what extent? Will you kindly furnish the following information? We leave blanks at the end of each question, for your reply. Your prompt attention will place us under obligation:

"How many convicts are employed in your penitentiaries?

"What articles do they manufacture?

"Please give name of articles and quantity manufactured each year?

"How many hours per day are convicts employed?

"What wages per day?

"Who feeds and clothes them?

"Under the contract system, does the pay continue whether they are employed or not?

"In case of sickness or disability, who pays the bills?

"Is the penitentiary self-sustaining?

"Should like your opinion as to the best method of employing this class."

ON MOTION OF MR. D. J. MOREY

the question of a plan of action was referred to a committee of three, to be appointed after hearing the replies of the State Secretaries.

PRESIDENT LEWIS' ADDRESS.

The Chairman then read an address compiled from replies from the

SECRETARIES OF THE SEVERAL STATES AND TERRITORIES,

which he interspersed and accompanied with appropriate and telling facts and comments.

GENTLEMEN:—I have summarized the information gathered as follows:

ALABAMA.

This State has two classes of convicts known as State and County. The State prisoners are under the direct supervision of the inspectors, who have the hiring and directing the management of them. All are hired out to contractors, and the money paid to the State treasury. The county convicts are also hired out, and their wages paid to the county treasury. This

CORRESPONDENT REPLIES

as follows: "As yet there is plenty of work at all trades and industries to give employment to the honest laborer; so I cannot say as yet that convict labor bars sober, industrious men from receiving employment at favorable wages."

The above opinion evidently was conceived from a contracted knowledge of the enormity of the prison contract system throughout the United States.

The correspondent does not say what is manufactured by these convicts, but states that "the result of their system is contentment and health of convicts, and a net earning of from \$30,000 to \$50,000 for the State."

ARKANSAS.

Arkansas had, on July 2d., five hundred and sixty-eight convicts, who were employed in manufacturing *cigars* and *bricks*. They are

taken in bulk by a lessee, who feeds and clothes them, and pays all the expenses of the prison, with the exception of the physician. This prison is self-sustaining, the lessee paying into the State treasury, on May 7th., for the year, \$25,700, averaging a little over *forty-five cents* per day. To the following question: "Should like your opinion as to the best method of employing this class?" the warden replies, "The problem is too intricate for a mere letter opinion."

CALIFORNIA.

We also find California falling into line with her penitentiary with Eastern and Western States.

THE WARDEN RECOMMENDS

"The *manufacture of jute* by purchasing the raw material and selling the produce on State account, the State owning the whole plant.

"The manufacture of *sash, doors and blinds*, on the price per piece plan, private individuals owning the plant and the State furnishing power and labor. *Manufacturing furniture* at the price per piece plan, individuals supplying the material and the State owning the plant, supplying power and labor." There are also

Tannery and harness departments—The State supplying the plant power and labor. Also a

Brick department—The State supplying all material and labor.

The jute department alone has given employment to more than 300 prisoners. Nearly 200 prisoners employed in the *sash, door and blind department*, at a rate of about *seventy-six cents* per day. The *furniture* department was formerly operated on the contract system, but under the change of constitution, the plant consisting of valuable machinery, was taken over to the account of the State. Large quantities of lumber and materials were purchased to operate the department for State account. It necessitates a very large outlay in the plant, and a correspondingly large outlay in materials.

Under the most favorable circumstances of profit, the State of California assumes the position of a personal competitor in the industries which properly belong to the people themselves.

THE WARDEN ADDS

"that the difficulty of running a business of this kind is that the legislature depends upon the income on convicts before making their appropriations, and often makes miscalculations, and in an institution where its legitimate expenses run from \$12,000 to \$15,000 per month for supplies alone, and the pay roll from \$7,000 to \$8,000 per month, when the earnings from the manufacturing department would represent one-third of the total income, it would readily appear that any shrinkage in the income will seriously embarrass the institution, and leave but one resource from which to obtain funds, and that by calling an extra session of the legislature, or by selling the manufactured goods, and not replacing the raw materials. The urgent need of funds forces the administration to realize on its manufactured articles, and it will frequently occur that a *great depression of the market* will result from these forced sales."

COLORADO.

Colorado manufactures *brick* and *lime*. Their shipments, on the average, amount to *five cars of lime* per day and *300,000 bricks*. These convicts are worked from nine to ten hours per day. The State does the work, not contracting any of their convicts, and

THE WARDEN

adds, as follows: "Our opinion is, that *convicts should be employed by the State on State account.*"

FLORIDA.

Florida has no penitentiary building for the confinement of her convicts, but they are contracted to the highest bidder for the entire number. There are at present 275, who are contracted by the *manufacturer of naval stores*, who receives the convicts at the place where sentence was pronounced, paying all expenses of transportation, also for feeding and clothing, medical treatment, and the cost of apprehending on escape, thereby saving the State from any cost or expense except arrest and conviction, but receiving no income from convict labor.

THE REPLY OF THIS WARDEN

indicates that he is not averse to the contract system. It is as follows: "I can conceive of no labor which a convict can do which a free man may not do and receive wages for."

IDAHO.

The Secretary of Idaho states that there is no marketable labor performed at the Territorial prison, by contract or otherwise. The convicts, imprisoned by the Territory, are supported by the same. If for crimes committed against the United States Government, then the convicts are supported by the Federal Government. The expense of thus maintaining them does not exceed seventy-five cents per day. The Secretary adds that he will, at a later date, give me his opinion as to the best method of employment for the convicts.

ILLINOIS.

The prison at Joliet makes *boots* and *shoes*, *harness*, *saddles*, *barrels*, *chairs*, and does *granite*, *monumental* and stone-cutting work. There are *1,261 convicts*. The labor of the convicts is sold to the highest bidder. This prison is self-sustaining.

IOWA.

The Iowa penitentiaries are located at Fort Madison and Anamosa. The convicts at Anamosa are employed by the State to quarry stone in the quarries near the prison. The stone is sold on the market to whomever wishes to buy.

The convicts at Fort Madison manufacture *boots and shoes, chairs and small tools*. They are let to contractors, who pay from *forty-five to fifty cents per day*, the State supporting them. This penitentiary is self-sustaining, so far as the convicts are concerned, but has not sufficient receipts to pay the salaries of its officers.

The warden writes: "Any system of prison labor that produces anything of value upon the market, or employs convicts where free labor would otherwise be employed, does, of course, interfere with free labor."

KANSAS.

The *wagon manufacturers* find as formidable a competitor here as in the Tennessee penitentiary. It matters very little what prices may be quoted on wages, for these *powerful enemies of honest and industrious labor* have sufficient backbone to make ruinously lower prices, so that it is *hopeless attempting to meet them in the competitive field*.

LOUISIANA.

Louisiana has *850 convicts* employed on the levee and in *railroad building*. They manufacture no kind of goods, and work twelve hours per day. The lessee takes their labor, and pays all expenses. The State gains nothing, and meets with no loss, as the lessee foots all the bills, and gets his pay of the convicts, by working them *twelve hours per day*.

MAINE.

Maine manufactures *harness and carriages*.

MASSACHUSETTS.

In the various institutions for confinement for penal offenses, convicts are employed as follows: In manufacturing *boots and shoes 616; brushes 213; chair seating 587 males and 5 females; clothing 508 males and 158 females; harnesses 99 males; laundry work 22 females; moulding 50 males; spring beds 80 males; stone cutting 90 males*. Total number of convicts 2,428. Total expenditures for everything \$904,125.28. Balance against prisoners \$640,123.92; 2,428 persons are employed, as stated above, out of 4,199 prisoners. All told, State prisons, county jails and reformatories, 5,199. The prisoners in the house of correction at Dedham are let for a lump sum of \$3,250 for all male prisoners, except those required about the prison and at the house of correction at Pittsfield. At the Dedham jail and house of correction, where are 141 prisoners, the average wages per day is 25 cents. Convicts at Pittsfield jail and house of correction manufacturing *shoes* are paid \$64 per year. At the Ipswich house of correction *shoe making, 15 cents per day*. At Lawrence jail and house of correction, *shoe making 16 cents per day*. Salem jail and house of correction, *making heels* for boots and shoes, *13 cents per day*. Greenfield jail and house of correction cane *seating chairs*, work is on the piece-price plan, averaging about 20 cents

per day. Springfield jail and house of correction *cane seating chairs 10 cents per day.* North Hampton, *cane seating chairs, 8 cents per day.* Cambridge jail and house of correction, *brush making work done on public account, average earnings about 40 cents per day for each employed man.* Plymouth jail and house of correction, *making spring beds, chairs, etc., 15 and 20 cents per day.* Boston and Fitchburg, *making clothing and chairs, average wages 22 cents per day.* Worcester, *average wages 10 cents per day.* State prison, *making molding, 50 cents per day. Shoe making, 50 cents per day. Spring beds, etc., 50 cents per day.* On the *piece plan \$1 to \$2.25 per dozen pairs of shoes.* Harness, *\$1.50 to \$7.50 per set.* Saddles from *25 to 75 cents each.* Clothing, *pantaloon \$3.70 per dozen pairs.* Making *shirts, 80 to 90 cents per dozen pairs.* Making *coats and vests, \$1.50 to \$2.25 per dozen.* Laundry work, *60 cents per dozen.* The overwork in the State prison is paid by contractors as follows: The average earnings by overwork at the state prison are about \$2.25 per man. At the house of correction at Ipswich the overwork amounts to about ninety cents per case of sixty pairs of boots or shoes. At the house of correction at Greenfield the county furnishes tobacco as a reward for overwork.

MICHIGAN.

The report from Michigan, from the Commissioner, states that the subject of convict labor is to be investigated by the Bureau, and the Report of the same will be furnished by January next. It is a well-known fact that the production of *wagons and agricultural tools* at the penitentiary in Michigan has, for a term of years, as well as at the present time, *been thrown upon the market*, and you, gentlemen, who have been forced to compete with the production, can better state what you have been compelled to do in disposing of your goods, when thus brought in competition with penitentiary work.

MINNESOTA.

At Stillwater, Minn., they manufacture *threshing machines, etc.* Convict labor averaging from *thirty-five to fifty cents per day.*

MISSOURI.

Nothing has been heard from Missouri.

MONTANA.

Montana wheels into line with her response:
"No convict-contract labor in Montana penitentiary."

NEBRASKA.

Nebraska penitentiary manufactures *bricks, brooms, trunks, laundry work, harness, and agricultural implements.* The contractor

pays the lessee *forty cents a day* for each convict, and he paying the State but *thirty-five cents per day* for each convict confined, and pays all prison expenses.

THE WARDEN REPLIES

as follows: "The contract system meets the requirements, but I am not in favor of leasing the prison and convicts to a lessee. I think the State should have charge."

NEVADA.

Nevada makes *boots and shoes*, and *cuts stone*, and last year they turned out \$50,000 worth of *boots* and \$15,000 worth of *shoes*, making a profit of \$4,000 over and above all expenses of running the penitentiary.

NEW HAMPSHIRE.

manufactures *wooden bedsteads*, *window shade rollers* and *ice skates*, paying their convicts *50 cents per day*.

NEW MEXICO.

New Mexico manufactures *bricks*; also, hires out convicts for working in the *quarries*; also, hires out convicts to *private parties*, within or outside of the penitentiary, under such restrictions and regulations as are specified by the Territorial laws, which are: "Proper treatment, safety of the convicts, and the greatest pecuniary benefit to the Territory."

NEW YORK.

New York manufactures *stoves*, *shoes*, and does laundry work. There are *900 men on stoves*, *300 on shoes*, and the remainder on various kinds of work. Here the state prisons are self-sustaining; the wages run from *fifty-six to sixty-three cents per day*.

NORTH CAROLINA.

has *1,310 convicts* in the state prisons where they make *shoes*, *horse collars*, *work on railroads* and other public work. They work ten hours per day, and the wages paid by contractors to the State are from *thirty-four to seventy-five cents per day per man*. *The correspondent thinks "the convicts should be employed by the State."*

RHODE ISLAND.

The state prison and Providence county jail are practicably one institution, which has confined in its walls 150 convicts, who are employed in the manufacture of *boots and shoes and wire goods*. *Price per day*, *40 cents* for the state prisoners and *20 cents* for the jail or short term men.

SOUTH CAROLINA.

South Carolina manufactures *boots, shoes, and hosiery*. The penitentiary itself is self-sustaining, and has been for the past five years. They hire out *one hundred and forty-six convicts* to *outside parties*, who are taken care of by *the contractors*, and are paid *\$12.50 per man* per month. One hundred and seventy-five are employed on farms—this is on the share principle, as the State maintains the men and takes a share of the crop. Eighty-six men are *making bricks*. One hundred and fifty are employed in *digging a canal on State account*; and the remainder are employed in the improvement and completion of the prison building, in home farming, carpentering, gardening, brick-laying, stone-cutting, and other general work. In addition to the above, a contractor from Pennsylvania employs sixty-nine men and twenty-four women and boys, *to manufacture shoes, stockings, etc.*

TENNESSEE.

The Tennessee penitentiary is a large competitor in the wagon market throughout the different states. It is difficult to ascertain the exact amount of production, but it is stated that there are manufactured annually from *18,000 to 19,000* vehicles by convicts, at about *thirty-five cents, per man, per day*.

TEXAS.

The penitentiaries at Huntsville and Rusk manufacture *pig-iron, castings* of all kinds, *wagons, carts, furniture, engines, boilers, clothing, shoes*, and the convicts are also engaged in *quarrying stone*, for railroad work, and in *farming*—contractors paying from *fifty to sixty cents per day* for their labor. The labor is divided as follows: On farms, 1,187; on railroads, 241; in rock quarries, 457. The above are at the Huntsville penitentiary. The convicts at the Rusk penitentiary are similarly employed to those of Huntsville.

THE SUPERINTENDENT SAYS:

"There is a variety of opinion in the State as to the proper policy to be pursued in operating our penitentiaries. Some favor operating on State account, but the majority favor the contract system. The

MANAGEMENT IS FAVORABLE

to the contract system, and stands ready at any time to contract shops and convicts for any legitimate industry.

"If profitable employment can be found within the prison walls of the penitentiary, we favor confining the prisoners within the walls, working them there under contract. The Huntsville penitentiary is very well supplied with machinery for the various industries carried on. In the boiler and machine shops we have over *\$30,000* worth of machinery. The

WAGON SHOP

has over *\$15,000* worth, and the *cabinet shop* has much machinery."

"We are willing to contract convicts, shops and machinery at a

fair price. The state to furnish the contractors the labor of 1,000 convicts for a term of ten years, to be used in operating the penitentiaries and industries therewith. The said contractors, to clothe the convicts, and in fact to furnish everything incidental to the management and keeping of said convicts. The contractors shall have the use of all buildings, machinery and tools, the blast furnace, ore privileges and wood on state land for fuel and steam purposes. The spur railroad and all other property belonging to the state not reserved. The

CONTRACTORS

to pay monthly for the labor at the rate of \$100 *per annum* for first-class men, \$75 for second-class men, and \$50 *per annum* for third-class men. The contractors to feed all convicts and guards.

"It was respectfully recommended that a

FIRST-CLASS FURNACEMAN

be procured, and that the furnace be run on state account, and that, even at the high rate of freight prevailing, pig iron ought to be made at a cost not exceeding \$14 per ton. The running of the furnace alone will give employment to at least 250 convicts. The demand for

PIG IRON

in the state is not sufficient to justify its manufacture, and the high rates of freight to St. Louis will not admit of its being shipped there. Hence, the whole product of the furnace should be converted into some merchantable castings in the prison, for which a market can be found in this and adjoining states and old Mexico."

THE WARDEN RECOMMENDS

"making cars and wheels, for which that iron is not excelled; then stoves, plows, water pipes, hollow ware, etc. These industries may be inaugurated and greatly developed, so that in a few years employment may be found for all the convicts for which the prison has capacity. To inaugurate such an enterprise, less money would be required than to stock a first-class wagon shop with material for one year. If the furnace be successfully operated, as it is presumable it can be, then preparations should be made to start at once some of the industries suggested. To do this, he recommends a liberal appropriation to be made, say not less than \$100,000 for the purchase of timber, for coaling purposes, teams and necessary machinery for each industry. There is a fine lot of wood machinery on hand, suitable for the purpose, and no doubt a car factory might be started for making flat and box cars."

He also suggests for the short time convicts, "that state authorities

PURCHASE A NUMBER OF LARGE FARMS

in different sections of the state, where the lands are rich and productive, and to stock them with the necessary teams and farm implements, and thereon employing these convicts in raising produce, with a reasonable appropriation to purchase and stock such lands and provide material for suitable prison buildings, which need not be expensive, as they could be built with convict labor, and a few years of good manage-

ment would reimburse the state, and afterward pay a good profit on the investment. Such farms in addition to raising cotton, corn, etc., for sale, could supply our prisoners at Huntsville and Rusk with bread and forage, and our factory with cotton, all of which we now buy in large quantities. In addition to the crops raised for sale, the feeding of convicts on these farms would be a reduction in expense by their raising potatoes, vegetables and meat."

UTAH.

The reply from Utah states that they do not employ their convicts. They are clothed and fed by the United States Government. The reply of the correspondent was a recommendation "to place them at hard work, the compensation to go towards supporting the families of the convicts."

VERMONT.

Vermont manufactures *shoes*.

WEST VIRGINIA.

West Virginia uses about fifty of her convicts for State purposes, the rest of them are contracted out, at from *fifty-two to sixty-five cents per day per man*. They make *whips, brooms, and wagons*. They turn out *3,000 wagons per year, 30,000 dozens of brooms*; products of *whips* not given.—the State clothing and feeding them—but was not self-sustaining last year.

WISCONSIN.

The penitentiary at Waupun manufactures *boots and shoes*, paying *fifty cents per day*, the State feeding and clothing them. This penitentiary fell short \$6,018 of being self-sustaining.

WYOMING.

Wyoming, responding to the call, states that "their prisoners are imprisoned in the penitentiaries of Nebraska and Illinois, under an arrangement made by their Board of Penitentiary Commissioners."

"This ends the list of States whose officials have responded to our circular letter for information."

MR. LEWIS continued with

GENERAL REMARKS, BASED ON THE REPORTS RECEIVED BY HIM.

"In one report sixty per cent. of the convicts were intemperate, and out of 460 convicts in one penitentiary, 318 had received no religious training; the balance, eighty-eight, were divided among the different denominations.

"You will notice in statements from some States or Territories that their convicts were contracted to do work out of their own state.

Some were sent from the Territory of Wyoming into Illinois; these to manufacture boots and shoes, etc., in competition with free labor.

"Some of the wardens claim that their penitentiaries are self-sustaining. So far as the penitentiary itself is concerned, it may be self-sustaining, but the question for you manufacturers and your employes to decide is, by what method these penitentiaries are made self-sustaining. The convicts thus employed are paid from *twenty-five to sixty-five cents per day* for manufacturing *boots and shoes, clothing, hosiery and jute, laundrying, making harnesses, saddles, wagons, carriages, chairs, furniture; manufacturing iron, castings, farming implements, wire goods, cigars; stone cutting, building railroads, threshing machines, plows, skates, etc.*; and by these goods, thus manufactured at prices paid for labor which are not sufficient to support any person under any circumstances, you are thrown in *direct competition* with this class of labor, where the *average wages per man, per day, does not reach fifty cents, when the average wages paid free or independent labor is not less than \$1.50 per day.* There being a difference of *over \$1.00 per day.*

BY WAY OF ILLUSTRATION:

"Take one of the penitentiaries where a thousand convicts are employed, where the wages do not average fifty cents per day in manufacturing chairs, furniture, agricultural implements, harness, etc. Now look at the other side of the picture: Take one thousand free mechanics working on the same class of goods; they are paid, on the average, not less than \$1.50 per day — a difference of \$1.00 per day per man — working 275 days per year, which equals *\$275,000 per year net profit on wages alone.* If manufacturers were to place their goods upon the market *at actual cost*, without interest on the investment, the contractors in one of our penitentiaries would clear the above amount.

"The time was when penitentiary goods were at a discount, but in the language of a prominent boot and shoe manufacturer, "they are now producing boots and shoes equally as good as are made outside of the penitentiary walls." The time was when their agricultural implements were at a great discount, but now the implements made in the penitentiaries are considered by the consumer equal to anything made outside, in a great many cases. Goods are warranted by the contractors and warranted by the dealers, so that the purchaser is protected as well from any damage by the merchant who sells penitentiary goods, as he who buys and sells goods manufactured by free or independent labor.

WAGON MANUFACTURERS PAY TAXES

upon every piece of timber, iron, every nail, screw, pint of varnish, pound of paint and every foot of ground, and in addition to all this, are compelled to insure our buildings, while there is no tax upon the penitentiary, no insurance on the buildings, as the State owns the property; and we are expected to quietly submit to *this outrageous competition by the State.* Your employes claiming that they are insufficiently compensated for their day's labor, your excuse is that competition is so strong, forcing the margin to such an insignificant figure, that you are unable to advance wages, and the question is at

once asked by the employe, why not demand higher prices for your goods, not knowing the strong competition from convicts, which is one of the *great causes of the decline* in some of our industries outside of the penitentiaries. A few years ago a certain penitentiary was manufacturing from 8,000 to 9,000 jobs per year, other manufacturers were producing from 15,000 to 16,000 vehicles.

"The penitentiaries have been rapidly increasing in their production, while independent manufacturers have been diminishing their output; therefore, it is claimed that our penitentiaries when they are thus brought in competition, are maintained by the manufacturers producing like goods, simply because prices are brought to such a low state, while those who have investments in lands, bonds, railroad stocks, etc., are not called upon to pay any of the expense incurred by maintaining the penitentiaries, except where they are not self-sustaining, the State in this case making up the deficiency. Would it not be better if this burden, instead of falling on the few, as it now does, were distributed equally on each tax-payer in the State? If it were thus divided, the burden would fall equally, and the burden thus distributed would be so light that no tax-payer would realize that there existed such a burden. It is a nice argument to claim that the penitentiaries are self-sustaining, and that the people are not taxed for the support of convicts! You can readily see that the position taken by such an argument cannot be maintained. It is not in accordance with political economy, to give one class an advantage over another; hence we call upon our state legislatures to devise some method better than the present one in giving employment to its convicts.

"Some suggest (men who have had experience in this, too,) that convicts are sent to penitentiaries for reformation, and not to be placed there as competitors with those who are law-abiding citizens and industrious; that

THEY SHOULD BE EMPLOYED

merely to *make their own clothing, and in taking care of prisons.* Others claim that they should *be educated and taught trades;* others, that they *work upon our highways,*—macadamizing them,—each city or county to pay for working its roads, thus equitably distributing the burden upon all tax-payers. It is true, that macadamizing our highways is not a necessity; but governments have erected buildings, forts, and macadamized roads, which were not a necessity at the time, but simply to give employment to the unemployed. And here would be raised an objection, if the convicts were to macadamize our roads, that they would be taking bread out of the mouths of the laboring class.

"It appears to me, that if all convicts were kept from manufacturing, there would be greater encouragement for the rising generation of boys to learn trades. Another manufacturer has suggested that there should be

NO MACHINERY ALLOWED

in our penitentiaries, and that convicts should be compelled to produce goods on the antediluvian plan. *This is a good suggestion,* which certainly would enable the independent manufacturer and laborer to

meet successfully in the market by means of machinery now employed.

"There are several *convict chair factories* in this country, and it is to their *iniquitous competition that the depressed condition of the*

CHAIR MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY,

recently, may be attributed. The chair manufacturers have lately been appealed to to *raise the wages* of their men, and this they *would cheerfully do*, if they could secure an advance in prices. But how can they, we submit, when they have to *fight prison competition and prison wages*—three pieces of bread, six pints of water, and a cell to sleep in?

"It must be rather galling to the honest chair-makers, working in our factories, and who are skilled mechanics and law-abiding citizens, to reflect that their *wages are ground down by the competition of thieves, fornicators, and embezzlers*—violators of human and divine law, and revolters against everything just and right! *Is it not a shame* that the product of murderers and thieves is put into market, competing against the work of *honest men and skilled mechanics*, who have to support their families, and who toil and pay taxes, and live peaceably under the constitution and laws of the land?—so that, as might easily happen, the burglar who broke into a man's house to steal may, by being put into a penitentiary, *become his competitor*, and the means of reducing his hard-earned livelihood?

"There are *thousands of convict chairs* sold every month in St. Louis, and we should like to hear what the

ST. LOUIS CHAIRMAKER'S UNION

think of it! We understand that trades unions are organized to discuss practical questions of this sort; and here we might suggest to the Furniture Workers' Union, that furniture is made in large quantities in certain Western penitentiaries, and that it *shuts St. Louis furniture out of a large trade*, or compels a reduction in price, and thus keeps the wages of St. Louis furniture workers down to rock bottom!

"How the convict system operates is very well shown in the following, which Mr. HELLER gave a *Globe-Democrat* reporter the other day: "*The key to the whole list of grievances in the chair making trade just now lies in the question of penitentiary paid labor.* It is an old question, and one that has lain dormant for some time now, but the present moment appears fitting for bringing it before the public once more. While other trades are subject to competition and the laws of supply and demand, we are subject to competition, the laws of supply and demand, and *underselling in the market by State Governments* as well. All the men in our trade in this town have been out on a strike and have returned. But so far from us, the employers, feeling any exultation or anything of that kind in the matter, *we sympathize with our men.* Their struggle is a hard one, and that they are poorly paid is what you may take as a fact.

"But what is the cause?

THE CAUSE IS THIS:

We continually have to compete in the markets with parties who can get their work done at chair making, at from fourteen to twenty

cents per day, compared with \$1.50 to \$2.50 *per day we have to pay our men*. The great bulk of the contract work carried on in the penitentiaries in the surrounding states is that of *chair making*. The Missouri penitentiary, it so happens, is an exception to this rule, and does no chair making; but on the other hand, at Fort Madison, for instance, *nothing is made but chairs*. The rate offered generally varies from *fourteen to twenty cents per day*, as I have said. Of course the prisoners do not get this, but it goes to pay for their keep. Not long ago, a foreman from one of the large St. Louis private factories left here to take charge of one of these penal establishments. As to the competition that ensues from this state of things, it comes to us right here at our doors. There are *several large furniture dealers* in St. Louis, who buy and vend extensively *chairs made at the penitentiaries*. And as a consequence, we often find in the market that in chairs, which we cannot afford to make for less than from \$4.50 to \$5.00, we are *being undersold by chairs at \$3.00*, with discount off.

"This is election year, when, in many States, members of the legislature are to be chosen, and we suggest that opponents of prison furniture get their work in effectually, by endeavoring to *secure the nomination and election of legislators pledged to the abolition of the evil*."

The question for you to decide is,

WHAT IS THE BEST METHOD

of employing this class of persons? The prison system is *degrading to every honest, hard working mechanic or manufacturer*. He is met by the purchaser, who tells him that the goods produced by the convict is *equally as good as those produced by him*. It unmans the laborer, who by his strong right arm earns a livelihood for himself and family, and he should not be menaced by such a system as convict labor.

"In thoroughly investigating this penitentiary labor question, we find all tax-payers contribute to erect the penitentiary, and to furnish machinery and all the paraphernalia necessary to a first-class manufactory. After the erection of these

PENITENTIARY FACTORIES,

the convicts are hired out at from eight to eighty cents per day—working upon goods which the manufacturers assembled here to-day are manufacturing, and who are paying their honest and independent employes on an average of not less than \$1.75 per day. The goods are produced after hard and honest toil, placed upon the market at a fair compensation to the manufacturer, when he is *met with the product of convict labor at an average that will not exceed fifty cents per day*. Here we are met in the competitive field by a competitor whose factory and machinery, taxes and insurance upon the same *have been paid for by you*. You have placed him there as a manufacturer to produce the same line of goods that you are manufacturing, *he paying his employes but fifty cents, while you are paying yours on an average not less than \$1.75 per day*, and in some cases, we are informed, the State has not been paid for months for this convict labor. In other States contractors are allowed to give their notes, running for

months without interest, while you, gentlemen, are compelled to pay your employes weekly, semi-weekly or monthly, which is nothing more than just and right that you should do. In the name of everything that is just between man and man,

IS THIS A JUST COMPETITION,

where the State throws these convicts upon the market, forcing them to overstock it with different articles, which they produce at wages which no man can live upon? You thereby are furnishing capital, by paying taxes to the State to maintain the penitentiaries, and then, in turn, the State is a manufacturer of the same class of goods which you are manufacturing.

"The contractor of prison labor has the *advantage over you and free labor of not less than one dollar per man per day*. All who pay taxes contribute to the capital of the contractor of prison labor in erecting the buildings, furnishing machinery, exemption from taxation, and if insured by the people, also pay the premium, if self-sustaining, save from further direct taxation. But the heaviest tax placed upon a people to-day is the indirect tax by this system, which puts it upon the few who are forced into competition with these contractors of prison labor. Thereby you, who do the manufacturing, are paying the larger portion of this burden, as is shown above.

"Gentlemen! it is left with you and your employes to decide what method will

EQUITABLY DIVIDE THIS UNEVENLY DIVIDED BURDEN.

"I trust that you will appoint committees to draft a constitution and by-laws, for an association which shall have for its object the abolition of the present system, and the substitution of a system that shall be of public benefit, as well as employing the unfortunate convict, distributing thereby the taxes equally upon all."

Chairman LEWIS' address was received with continued applause.

At the close of the address, Mr. MOREY, of Racine, moved, that inasmuch as the Chair had suggested a method of action, his former motion, to appoint a committee to report a plan of action, be reconsidered. The motion was carried.

It was moved and carried, that "when we adjourn we adjourn to meet at 2 o'clock P. M., and that the gentlemen representing the several interests and branches of business confer together in the interval; also, that those present register their names, branches of business and places of residence."

Mr. FLOWER, of Madison, moved that a committee of three be appointed by the Chair to draft and submit to the meeting a Constitution and By-Laws. Carried.

The Chair appointed the Messrs. F. A. Flower, A. J. Webster and Morris Rosenfield.

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The adjourned meeting was called to order at 2:30 o'clock P. M. By invitation of the Chair, the following gentlemen addressed the Convention:

Mr. GEO. S. REDFIELD, Vice-President of the National Tubular Axle Company, of Chicago and McKeesport; Prof. A. O. WRIGHT, Secretary of State Board of Charities and Reform, of Wisconsin, also Chairman of the Committee on Prisons and Reformatories of the National Board of Charities and Corrections; JOHN W. HINTON, Esq., President of Northwestern Tariff Bureau, of Milwaukee; Hon. JONATHAN PERINE, Associate Editor of *Farm, Field and Stockman*, of Chicago; JOSEPH MILLER, Esq., of J. Miller & Co., of Racine; C. H. MOORE, Esq., Secretary of La Belle Wagon Works, of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and others.

Mr. REDFIELD spoke as follows:

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN:

I am in no sense a public speaker, and have only acceded to the request of your Chairman to address you on the subject which calls us together, from a sense of its great importance, not only to us as manufacturers, but to the community at large.

The system of contract convict labor, as practiced in our state prisons, is clearly based upon false principles.

Tested by experience, its outcome is bad, its tendencies being to depress the condition of certain classes of industrious law-abiding mechanics; to interfere with the investments of capital outside of the penitentiaries; and to corrupt the administration of justice, by holding out inducements to courts, to inflict the longest terms of imprisonment, so as to secure the criminal's services for a protracted period; while as regards the felon himself, two prime objects of his punishment are largely missed—*reformation and the "hard labor,"* provided for in the sentence of the law.

This question of convict labor is an old one. It was agitated with great bitterness when our oldest men were boys. More than fifty years ago,

GOV. MARCY, OF NEW YORK, SAID,

in a public letter: "That any class of citizens who yield obedience to the laws, and contribute to the support of government, should be injured by the means used for the punishment of malefactors, is manifestly unjust; a system of prison discipline which necessarily produces such a result is clearly wrong; and a government which sustains it neglects one of its obvious duties—the duty of protecting the equal rights of all." (Applause.)

In those early days, however, the evil was comparatively small; for Europe had not then used this country as a dumping-ground for her jail-birds and vicious paupers, nor had the labor-contract system become an almost universal adjunct of our state prisons.

The State of New York has recently recognized this state of facts, her legislature having abolished the contract system, leaving no vestige of it in her treatment of criminals.

THE ONLY LEGITIMATE OBJECT OF GOVERNMENT

is equal protection of all, in person, life and property; but when malefactors are made to gain profits for the State, by manufacturing a class of articles which a certain portion of citizens also manufacture for their livelihood, it is obvious that a fundamental principle of government is violated, since equal protection is no longer extended to all. The moment a prisoner is set at work to learn a trade, or any branch of a trade, and the product of his labor is sold, as it usually is, with overmastering cheapness, some free citizen is unequally and oppressively burdened. Such result is the exact reverse of the law's purpose, which is to keep the felon from committing further mischief, not to make him an instrument of new or more widely reaching evil. It is manifestly unjust that any manufacturing class should experience injurious competition from a government to which they have a right to look for *protection*,—that they must strive against ruinous opposition where they

HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT DEFENSE.

There must be something radically wrong in the scheme of punishment, which converts the malefactor into an agent of ruin, merely that he may not become a burden to the money chest of the State. To save expenditure by hiring out convicts to perform services, which reduce the wages or destroy the business of law-abiding tax-payers, is a monstrous perversion of the function of government—a perversion which not only deprives honest citizens of due reward for their industry and thwarts legitimate enterprise, but which may even go to the extreme of driving some unfortunate persons, through loss of employment and of purchasing power, to the commission of crime, thus virtually making the mode of *punishing* crime a means of *increasing* crime. The mere statement of such a tendency involves the condemnation of the system from which it can result. (Applause.)

Considering that the convict is necessarily deprived of his liberty, is entirely subject to the will of a task-master, set over him by law, that he may be punished for insubordination, and that neither his earnings nor his products belong to himself—only food, coarse clothing, and indispensable shelter being furnished to him—his condition is that of a slave, and his labor,

PRACTICALLY SLAVE LABOR,

which when brought into competition with *free labor*, must operate to drag it down to its own level. This degrading influence is inherent in the system of trade work in prisons, and springs from it as the plant grows from the seed.

As evil can only be prevented by uprooting its cause, the remedy can be found nowhere except in the *abolishment of the system itself*. (Applause.) The convicts have lost their freedom by their crimes, and are subject to the authority of the state, which, in its turn, belongs to the people, for whose benefit and safety it was instituted;

hence the convict-labor system is using what belongs to the *whole* people to oppress and injure a *part* of the people. This action by the public's servants cannot be defended in the forum of morals or of justice, and it

UGHT TO BE BROUGHT TO A FULL STOP.

The system may be viewed in still another light. It is the exclusive employment by government of a wages-saving machine in competition with a certain class of citizens who have no such advantages. The State prison, turned into a mechanical institute, in which trades are taught and carried on, is, in effect, a wages-saving contrivance, by which the cost of production is reduced to a minimum; for the cheapest of slave labor is thus made to co-operate with the latest inventions of automatic machinery, with which our prison shops are filled; hence the State, or the agents to whom it has for profit sold the services of the convicts, can easily afford to sell articles of prison manufacture at prices which overmaster and ruin the honest craftsman. (Applause.)

Thus is the *free citizen's* vocation

INTERFERED WITH BY A DEGRADING RIVALRY,

and his means of livelihood put in peril.

If this citizen is driven to forsake his now overstocked calling, and engage in some other, he not only loses the money value of his skill in the surrendered calling, to which he may have devoted the best part of his life, but his competition in the new branch to which he resorts may operate injuriously to those already engaged in it. If the equal rights of even one citizen be trampled upon by our state prison system, there is ground to demand a remedy for the wrong; how much more so when the rights of many are trampled upon.

If the wages, or the employment of any class of laborers, or the profits of any class of investors, are diminished, though but in the proportion of a mill on the dollar, they have a right to demand redress; for it is a grave wrong to injure them to any extent whatever by the *means* used for the punishment of malefactors. "A government of the people, by the people, and for the people," has no legal or moral right

TO ENTER INTO RUINOUS COMPETITION

with any citizen or class of citizens in any industrial pursuit. Every few years some new outgrowth of harmfulness is developed in the system of contracts for prison labor.

In some States the convicts are worked by contractors in gangs under guards, outside the prison. There the miserable creatures are overworked in both tasks and hours, besides being supplied with unfit food, until the death rate has assumed such frightful proportions as to extort protests of indignation from some of the local newspapers. If the convict, driven to desperation, attempts to escape, he is remorselessly shot down. Thus does the system slide into abuses by an inevitable tendency.

When the services of convicts are sold to the highest bidder, it is natural that the sole object of the contractor should be to pile up

profits. All humane and reformatory considerations are apt to be cast to the winds; the minds and bodies of the prisoners are

TRANSFORMED INTO PURELY MONEY MAKING MACHINES

in which health and morals and life are all subordinated to the one absorbing purpose of the contractor—money getting. (*Hear! Hear!*)

An exemplification of the idea just expressed is to be found in the alleged recent attempts to corrupt the administration of justice for the advantage of those who purchase the service of convicts. It is said that judges of

COURTS HAVE BEEN APPROACHED WITH BRIBES,

to induce them to inflict the extreme penalty of the law in criminal cases on trial before them, so that the contractor may be benefited by an unusual abundance of the cheapest labor for the longest attainable periods. General success in this vile object is another of the probable outgrowths of the convict labor system, whereby trivial offenses are exaggerated into higher crimes, and the severest penalties are imposed for a bribe of so much per head.

A system, fraught with such giant dangers, should be brought to an end without delay.

NOW, WHAT IS THE REMEDY?

One remedy proposed is the *keeping of the convicts under lock and key*, without setting them to perform any kind of productive labor. This, however, is merely escaping from *one* predicament to fall into *two* others.

The original incentive to

CRIME IS NURSED INTO GREATER STRENGTH

by the condition of chronic idleness. When the prisoner issues forth again into the busy world, after his long confinement, he is more helpless than before to lead an honest life. The world has moved since he went to prison, but he has not merely remained stationary, he has positively retrograded. His necessities, which he does not know how to provide for without invading other people's rights, plunge him anew into acts of lawlessness, and imure him once more in the penitentiary. The proposed remedy prevents one harm to society, but creates harm of another kind. This is one of the predicaments. Again, while the criminal is in prison in idleness, his whole support falls upon the state, and the cost is raised by taxation, which falls upon all property holders. Capital is thus forced to foot the total expense of punishing crime; and then, when the criminal is turned loose again upon society, after serving out his sentence,

CAPITAL MUST BEAR THE BRUNT

of his return to lawless courses. Thus, by the proposed remedy, does the burden fall upon one class of the people, instead of being fairly distributed among all classes. This is the second predicament. (*Applause.*)

Another proposed remedy is, to withdraw the convicts from making one class of articles, and to set them to produce a different class of articles. For example, let the transfer be from making

wagons to cutting stone—to developing the quarries. This, however, would not cure the evil; it would merely change the location of the grievance. The complaint of the wagonmakers would be satisfied, but it would next be the turn of the stonecutters to demand redress.

Suppose we secure a shifting of the burden to the day laborers, by employing the convicts in digging canals, in building railroads, and in other like toil. Here the greatest amount of injustice is done, and the grievance much intensified; for the ordinary day laborer does not require any special skill, is the most helpless of all the classes who live by wages, receives the smallest reward for his services, and needs most of all the shield of protection.

This proposed remedy but lands us in a still worse predicament. It is evidently not just to make any particular class of our industrious citizens the scapegoat of our convict-labor-contract system. *The seed of the error is in the system itself.*

Where, then, are we to look for real light on the subject? In what consists a true solution of this intricate problem? *This is indeed a difficult subject.*

PUBLIC ROADS ARE A PUBLIC NECESSITY,

yet the making and the repairing of these roads is not generally accomplished by hiring laborers for long periods at fixed wages, but by requiring the residents along the line of the roads to contribute, each a day or two, or to provide an acceptable substitute, at certain stated intervals to do the needed work.

Convicts might be assigned to these tasks, without materially interfering with employment for labor in any direction. The highways would be kept in much better condition than they are now; the proficiency of constant practice would lead to corresponding excellence of the work done, and an irksome duty would be lifted from the masses of the people.

In seasons unsuited to work upon the roads, the convicts might be kept busy in breaking stone, or in other service preparatory to road making and road repairing.

Again, it has been suggested that convicts might be

LOCATED ON STATE FARMS,

and there made to produce their own food. Any surplus might be disposed of in the open market, at current prices, without precipitating any disturbance of values, because the quantity of produce to be sold would always be such a trivial proportion of the whole in the country, as to produce scarcely a ripple of depreciative influence.

Again, convicts might be set to making articles not produced in the United States, yet which are imported. By this method the criminal classes, even after leaving the penitentiary, would not compete with honest labor in any of its ordinary vocations, yet have a skilled occupation by which to earn a lawful livelihood. Inquiry would bring to light a considerable number of articles suited to this remedy. Convicts could in this way be made instrumental in naturalizing and developing entirely new arts upon our soil—arts which

might not otherwise come here—and might thus contribute to the general welfare of society, instead of

BEING A CONSTANT MENACE

and injury to established industry.

But whatever plan of remedy shall be found worthy to be first tried, it is certain that the principle of the plan must embody a radical departure from the system as it now exists. *Nothing short of an absolute stoppage of the present system* can end the gigantic evils which develop from its tendencies. (*Applause.*)

Manufacturers and workmen should combine their energies and concentrate their efforts to accomplish that result. In that, they will require only what is reasonable and right, and what will be granted so soon as the toiling millions shall make it evident that they are united in their demand, without regard to political affiliations, and are *unalterably resolved in their purpose to obtain redress from this great evil.*

Recognizing the imperative demand for action on the subject before us, *the*

LEGISLATURE HAS CALLED UPON THE VOTERS

of this state to say at the ballot-box in November next, whether our free industries shall be relieved from the incubus of slave labor or not.

I believe that the voice of the people thus expressed, will be as overwhelmingly for the abolishment of this system, as that given by the electors of the State of New York, when the question was submitted to them two years ago.

To the manufacturers who are here from other states we say: Agitate the subject at home, until all the states now selling convict labor shall do away with the system forever. (*Continued Applause.*)

PROF. A. O. WRIGHT, of Madison, Wis., then addressed the Convention as follows:

MR. CHAIRMAN—I have been very much interested in your address and in the others that have been made upon this important subject. I came to this convention to learn, and I have been learning from what has been said already.

I have been opposed to the contract system of convict labor from the standpoint of prison reform, and I wished to learn what were the reasons for the opposition to this system by manufacturers and their employes, and what they proposed as a substitute. I knew of course, that gentlemen of such business ability as those represented here *knew what they were talking about*, when they considered contract convict labor as an injury to their business; and I was willing to take it on their word that it is so. But I wanted to learn just where it is that the shoe pinches, and some of the statements made here have given me light upon that subject. I find that it is not competition of which you complain, but unfair and unequal competition. (*Applause.*)

You will pardon me for calling your attention to the fact that the cheapness of prison labor that has been spoken of, is partly due to its being worth very little. An average prisoner whose labor is *sold for fifty cents a day*, is not worth near as much as the free laborer who works for a dollar and seventy-five cents a day. You select the free

laborers, who work for you, on account of their faithfulness and efficiency. The prison contractor has to take all that are turned over to him. They are all unwilling laborers; they are not working for themselves. Many of them are very careless or neglectful about tools and material. Most of them are unskilled laborers, or else have never learned to work at all. The idleness, intemperance and recklessness that brought them to State prison impair their value as workmen, so that only a few of them are worth anything like what the workmen in our factories are. If they were worth anything like as much as factory hands, capitalists would be more ready to take prison contracts at the low figures at which they are offered in Wisconsin and other States, where contracts are given to the highest bidder without favoritism.

But after all this has been said, it is *still an unfair competition* between the capitalist who buys prison labor and the capitalist who employs free laborers, as is shown by the results stated to us to-day, that

PRISON CONTRACTORS PERSISTENTLY UNDERSELL

other manufacturers. The advantage to the prison contractor is not as great as a mere comparison of wages makes it seem, but he still has a solid advantage.

The side from which I have been studying this question has been that of prison reform. I am a member of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections; the largest organization that deals with this subject, and I am Chairman of the Standing Committee on Prisons and Reformatories. This body has already expressed itself against the contract system of prison labor, and our committee will doubtless report next year at our meeting at Omaha, against the contract system. But we have never heard from manufacturers on this subject, and I now invite your Chairman, Mr. Lewis, to present the manufacturer's side of the case next year at Omaha, in a paper to be arranged for.

Prison reformers are opposed to the contract system, because it stands in the way of an effective reformatory system in prison. We believe in the

BRITISH SYSTEM OF INDETERMINATE SENTENCES

to prison and conditional discharges from prison, with a view to making the prisoner a law-abiding and self-supporting citizen, rather than of making him pay the expense of guarding and boarding him in prison by his labor.

There are really *five systems of prison labor* in actual use in the United States; though your attention is naturally directed to *the contract system*, because that is in practice in all these great interior States, centering around Chicago, where we meet to-day.

In nearly all the Southern states the infamous lease system is practiced. Under this, *the prisoner is sold as a slave* to the contractor, who feeds him, clothes him, guards him with rifles and blood hounds, and works him *regardless of health or life*. The master in old times had an interest in the life of his negro slave, which made him treat him fairly well in most cases. But the prison contractor has no interest in the life of the convict, white or black. The result is seen in

the fact, that ten per cent of all the convicts of the South die every year, and in some places, twenty-five per cent. I consider the convict labor system of the South the most inhuman thing ever allowed to exist in this country. (HEAR! HEAR!)

What keeps it in force is the *fact that it pays*. A revenue is given to the exhausted treasuries of the Southern States from the blood and tears of these worse than slaves, sentenced for crimes often petty, to *death by slow torture*.

In the North, the *general rule is the contract system*, which is, nowadays, humane in the treatment of the prisoners, as the small death rate shows. The State guards and feeds the prisoners, and merely sells their labor to the contractor. The strength of the contract system is, that it costs less to the State treasury than the public account system.

A few States still retain the *public-account system*. Under this, the State works the prisoner at some kind of manufacture on its own account, and not through contractors. This was formerly almost universal in the North. The difficulty with it was, that wardens, *appointed by political influence* and paid only average salaries, did not possess the business ability which you gentlemen have shown in the management of your great industries. The State would not pay salaries large enough, and guarantee a reasonable permanency of position, so as to attract the men capable of managing great business enterprises, and consequently great investments of capital were made by the State, only to meet with constant losses. The contract system is a *safe business investment for the State*. That is the reason it is as strong as it is with the people and the legislatures.

The *fourth system* is one advocated by my friend, Mr. Z. R. Brockway, of the Elmira (N. Y.) Reformatory. He calls it "*the piece-price plan*." He has made it successful in his institution, and it has been adopted elsewhere to some extent. The peculiarity of it is, that the State makes a contract with some one for labor, but receives pay, not for the day's work, but for the pieces of work done. The difference is, that the *control of the labor is then with the State, and not with the contractor*. Mr. Brockway claims that this system solves the problem. I am not ready yet to say that it should be so considered.

The *fifth system*, I think specially deserves your attention, as it more nearly answers your demands than any of the others. It is in use in the

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA PENITENTIARY

at Philadelphia. *Prisoners are confined in separate cells, and do not see other prisoners*. They labor separately, by hand, with simple tools, and their prison is in no sense a factory. In all other prisons in the United States, except Mr. Brockway's at Elmira, the labor is the one great thing to which everything else in the prison gives way, because that is where the money comes from, and to make the prison self-supporting is the first consideration. In Philadelphia there is *no attempt to make the prison self-supporting*. They say there that they are *trying to make men, not money*. You will find there the most complete and careful statistics upon the causes of crime that have been compiled in this country, and they show that *idleness and lack*

of a handicraft is the fruitful mother of crime, that a boy with a good trade and willingness to work will rarely get into prison, but that it is the hoodlums and rowdies of our cities and villages that fill the prisons. The authorities of this prison do not intend that their prison shall become a school of vice through the association of convicts together. Hence they are kept separate at work as well as in their cells.

You have got to face this fact, gentlemen, that the cheapest prisons to the taxpayer for the time being are also *the worst, both morally and economically*. (Hear!) To abolish the contract system of convict labor is going to cost the States more to maintain their prisons. It is best to acknowledge that fact, and to claim that it is worth all its costs to get better prisons, and prisons that shall not compete unfairly with honest labor. These interior States are largely agricultural, and the representatives from the farming districts study economy.

SHOW THEM THAT THE TRUEST ECONOMY,

here as well as elsewhere, is to spend money wisely, not to hoard it. Our states are all of them rich, and can afford to do that which is for the highest interest of the whole community, if it does cost a little more money. (Applause.)

The difficult question for this Convention, is *what to substitute for the contract system*. Among the suggestions made here some are not feasible. For instance the proposition to work the convict on the highroads. The facilities for escape and the destruction of discipline, in scattered gangs of men, are bars to this, for the convicts in State prison, though not for minor offenders in jail. The plan of putting them on farms has been practiced successfully in Germany for tramps, in the sandy lands of Westphalia, and might perhaps do for tramps here, but not for State prison convicts.

I am glad to hear

NO ONE PROPOSES IDLENESS FOR CONVICTS.

(Applause.) We seem to be agreed that they should work, but just under what conditions we are not certain. Perhaps the suggestion to abolish the use of all machinery in prisons may be worth considering in combination with the Pennsylvania plan of separate confinement at labor. I have great confidence in *the ability of this body of practical business men to find some solution to this difficulty*, if they go at it in earnest. And the question must be answered, *What are you going to do with them?* before the contract system is permanently abolished. I confess my own inability to fully answer that question at present.

Allow me to suggest a point that has not been presented. The United States has about a thousand prisoners of the grade of state prison convicts, who are placed in several state prisons, mostly under the contract plan. A bill is now pending in the House of Representatives *to establish a federal prison* on the best reformatory methods. It was introduced at the suggestion of members of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, and it has the hearty support, not only of that body, but of the National Prison Association. Now, if this Convention makes a permanent organiza-

tion, as it doubtless will do, and also supports this measure, it will be backed by the three national bodies which are interested in this subject, and can easily be carried. (Applause.)

I thank you for the opportunity of expressing my views and those of other prison reformers. From a different standpoint, we have reached the "same conclusion with you, that *the contract system of prison labor must go.* (Continued applause.)

Mr. JOHN W. HINTON, of Milwaukee, on being introduced, spoke as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION—In an address before the Wisconsin Legislature several years ago, I attacked the iniquitous system of convict-contract labor then existing in the Wisconsin State Prison. As a citizen of Wisconsin I feel proud to see our State so well represented here to-day, and am truly glad that such a deep interest is manifested in the desire to abolish

SUCH AN OUTRAGEOUS SYSTEM

as that under consideration. (Applause.)

I recall or repeat here what I said to the Legislature of Wisconsin several years since:

"While I am politically opposed to the gentleman, (Hon. Edward Keogh,) a member of this house, who is so faithfully fighting against the convict-contract labor system, I am in hearty sympathy with him in his efforts by the bill introduced, which he is to advocate for its abolishment. When once the enormity of the system is understood by the people, particularly by the laboring classes, that system will soon be abolished. What do we see? Why, gentlemen, we see murderers and manslayers, forgers and faro men, horse thieves and counterfeiters, rapists and rogues, with *rascals, of every known grade, competing within the walls of our State prison with many forms of labor outside!* Those convicts hired out at forty cents a day to a contractor living in another State, who derives all the great profits accruing from the contract, and thus *all its great benefits* go into a foreign State—so far as Wisconsin is concerned—while our State is taxed heavily. Every homestead of every mechanic and laborer in Wisconsin is taxed to help support the state prison of Wisconsin, that a foreign contractor may enrich himself out of the labor of convicts, for which our *state receives forty cents a day*, and has to board and lodge and clothe and guard the convicts! And we are told this system is intended to be self-supporting! Why, gentlemen, there is no truth in that statement. There is at this time a bill introduced in this house asking an appropriation by the state of *thirty thousand dollars, actually required*, it is stated, to support the Wisconsin State Prison for two years, owing to the biennial session system being adopted.

What then becomes of the fallacy, if not falsehood, of the alleged "self-supporting theory, &c.?"

I believe, Mr. President, that I am justified in asserting that convicts are often worked harder, and

MADE TO ACCOMPLISH MORE WORK

daily *inside* the State prison, than they would be expected to do, were they free men *outside* of the penitentiary.

One of the assumptions advanced here is, "the reformation of prisoners," as though it was, as stated, or strongly intimated, that that was the first or chief object of punishment.

Mr. President, I hold myself second to no man in Wisconsin, where I have lived more than forty-three years, in my efforts towards securing the reformation of those capable of being reformed — I mean the young, particularly the boys — efforts which, aided by powerful newspapers in those days, were crowned with success. Whenever reformation of *a convict* can be accomplished, I favor it; provided it can be effected without hurting an honest mechanic or laborer who, outside of a prison, is toiling to support a wife and children *honestly by industry, sobriety and economy.* (Applause.) But the welfare of the honest man, outside of the prison, is of far greater moment and consideration than to make

A PROFIT OUT OF THE CONVICTED MURDERER

or thief, or other convict sentenced to incarceration in the State prison, *because he had committed crime outside of that prison.* The assumption, then, that there *must be* convict-contract labor in the prison is a fallacy; it is based upon a false assumption. I say, without any hesitation whatever, that the least consideration should be given to the convicts; but the alleged humane sympathy, so much dwelt upon, should be *bestowed on honest and struggling labor, that had committed no crime, offended no law,* in its arduous struggles to get an honest living. (Applause.)

I was informed by a gentleman engaged in manufacturing boots and shoes in Milwaukee, that not long since a travelling salesman came into his store, where his own goods were retailed, and showed him work made in a State prison equal, of the kind, to any he had ever seen. He inquired as to the prices that were paid for certain portions of the work, and they ranged *as 18 to 28, 15 to 35, 30 to 48,* and so on. The small amounts were what were paid in a certain State prison where *the convicts did piece work,* and he said to me, "How can I compete with those prices?" Another gentleman also informed me — he is, I think, the oldest boot and shoe manufacturer, of any note, in the Northwest — that *unless the system of convict-contract labor in State prisons, making boots and shoes, was abolished, he would certainly go out of the business.*

I will not extend my remarks. I am in hearty sympathy with this movement, and am, as I said before,

PROUD TO SEE WISCONSIN

so fully represented here. I am sorry to say that one of the papers in our State took particular pains to ridicule and decry the honest and, I believe, praiseworthy efforts, that were made by some of us, several years ago, to break up the iniquitous and cruel system of convict-contract labor.

Mr. President, for a great many years of my life I have been fighting, to the best of my ability, to guard American labor against an even-handed conflict with the pauper labor of Europe, and I have for several years, and

SHALL CONTINUE AS LONG AS GOD GIVES ME LIFE

and reason to guide me, fight as faithfully, as strenuously, and as

earnestly, to guard American labor, skilled and unskilled, against the cruelly oppressive competition of convict labor in the penitentiaries and State prisons of their own country. (Great applause.)

The Chair remarked that we had heard from the wagon and threshing machine manufacturers, and others, but had not heard anything about

BOOTS AND SHOES,

and he would like to hear from Mr. J. MILLER of Racine, Wis., who was extensively engaged in that business.

MR. MILLER responded as follows:

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE ASSOCIATION—After hearing the eloquent remarks by the members of this Convention, I hardly feel able to do justice to my thoughts, but if you will agree to stand the punishment, I will make my remarks as brief as possible.

I can heartily endorse everything that has been said in regard to the evil it has brought on both laborers and manufacturers from the way convict labor has been handled for the past fifteen years. (Applause.)

In the first place, when a convict is sent to prison, we have no right to suppose that he takes the place of only a single man's labor, (that is if he labors at all) but just as soon as he enters the prison, he is put to work at one of the best improved machines, and in three weeks he becomes an expert, and with the aid of this machine and power, he takes the place of from five to seven, and in many cases ten mechanics of free labor, working without the aid of this machinery, so that you will readily see how it effects the free labor mechanic. For this labor the contractor pays all the way from

TWENTY-FIVE TO FIFTY CENTS PER DAY,

including factory room, power and expensive overseers, to see that the men put in their time well, which we cannot afford in our own factory. On the other hand we pay our men all the way from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per day, a good average from \$1.75 to \$1.90 per day; from which I leave it to you to judge how it affects the mechanic and manufacturer of boots and shoes.

At a rough estimate, I would say that one-sixth of the boots and shoes made in Wisconsin, are those made in prison and in reform schools. Now I will show you, Gentlemen, how this affects the market. You will find the most improved machinery in these institutions, and that they are making the most staple lines, as it would not pay them to put the convicts through a course of apprenticeship, in order to make the variety we are obliged to in a free institution.

On the contrary, they run the year round on these staple lines, causing an enormous accumulation at certain times of the year, forcing them to sell at low prices, in order to get rid of these stocks, and at a price unremunerative to a free labor institution.

THIS CAUSES LAY-OFFS IN FREE LABOR

institutions, until these stocks are worked off, or the manufacturer has to meet these reduced prices, or he must find some trade that the

prison goods have not reached. Pardon me, Gentlemen, for taking so much of your valuable time, but permit me to say, it is an evil; and how to get rid of it, and what to do with convict labor, is a most important question. I have listened to the various plans proposed, such as "to work them at hard labor on the road, etc., etc.;" and while I wish to be charitable, would it not be a good plan to change your laws, namely, for minor crimes, money fines or imprisonment, and for greater criminals, such as horse thieves, house breakers, those guilty of arson, and other similar crimes, for the second or third offense, inflict capital punishment, and in this way reduce your number of prisoners? I would suggest, however, if you wish to work the convicts inside of prison walls, to take power and machinery away, and LET THEM WORK BY HAND, and if any machinery is necessary, let it be propelled by hand; in this way you will

MAKE MECHANICS OF PRISONERS

and at the end of their time, they will be fitted to make a living for themselves, instead of being a tool to run just one machine.

I fear I am exhausting your patience, but I will briefly relate a circumstance that came under my own observation. Only this spring a young man well dressed, and showing traces of intelligence, came to my factory, and asked for a job. I asked him what he could do, and he said "run a machine." I then asked him what kind of a machine, and he said "some kind of a bottom leveller." I asked him if he could do not anything else, and before he gave me his answer, tears came to his eyes, and he asked if he could see me privately. On taking him into my office, he told me his story. He said he had just been pardoned out of the New York State penitentiary for killing his step father, when he was seventeen years of age, while he was in the act of abusing his mother. He had seized a gun, and shot him dead. After serving five years, Governor Hill had pardoned him out. After working five years,

ALL THE POOR FELLOW KNEW WAS TO RUN ONE MACHINE.

(Shame!) You may call that learning a trade, so that a man can help himself after he is out, but it is nothing of the kind. Even our reform schools are run just in this way, and the boys know nothing of mechanism. Right here I would say a word in praise of our deaf and dumb institution, which instructs the boys in making boots and shoes by hand. I have had some of them in my employ, and find I can work them in very nicely, and they seem to have some general knowledge of the trade.

If our prisons could be so worked, in a reformatory way, as to benefit the unfortunate in his lifetime, and not enrich the monopolist, at the expense of a State manufacturer and mechanic, it would be all right. If it were carried on in good faith, so that

HONEST MANUFACTURERS COULD HONORABLY COMPETE,

the convicts could be worked in smaller numbers, and, at different trades, where hand work could be profitably employed, and there is not much doubt in my mind that the State would realize just as much in the end.

The present system is such that no one but a rich corporation can make a contract with the State for convict labor. I have it from a practical prison contractor that he estimates

IT TAKES \$1,000 CAPITAL FOR EACH CONVICT

employed, and I believe there is not a man in Wisconsin that cares to make a bid for our convict labor. Consequently the bids have to come from outside. In fact seven or eight of the contracts of the Western States prisons come from large capitalists of Chicago, otherwise they might be worked just as profitably in small squads at hand labor, and to a great profit to the convict if he ever gets out.

Thanking you for your attention, Gentlemen, I hope we can find some remedy for this great evil. (Applause.)

Mr. C. H. MOORE, of Fond du Lac, addressed the Convention as follows:

MR. CHAIRMAN:—The problem, "What shall we do with our convicts?" is a very knotty one to solve. The great question to be considered, is this: How they are to be treated with regard to producing the best results for their physical and moral welfare, and not bring their labor into competition with that of a free man?

The question presents itself to my mind in

FOUR ASPECTS:

FIRST—THE GENERAL AND INDISCRIMATE LEASING

of convict labor to the highest bidder, irrespective of what the results of their labor may be, the object of the State being to get the greatest amount of money from their labor, so as to render them self-supporting and least burdensome to the tax-payer directly. The evils of this system are plainly to be seen. As the convicts are producing merchantable articles, in which the cost of their labor averages only about twenty-five cents per day—coming into direct competition with free labor, which should have a remuneration of at least one dollar and fifty cents per day. Statistically, there are about fifty thousand convicts in the United States and Territories, who are producing, annually, merchantable goods, with their labor at about twenty-five cents per day—a total value of labor amounting to three million seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The same labor if done by free working men at \$1.50 per day would aggregate twenty-two million five hundred thousand dollars. The moral welfare of the convicts thus employed is in no way improved. The main object being to get the greatest money value out of their labor.

SECOND—THE EMPLOYMENT OF CONVICT LABOR ON STATE AND PUBLIC WORKS.

The results of this system are not so full of evil as that of the first—the character of the work produced not being merchantable, but at the same time the labor comes into direct competition with that of the

free working man, and is, in my judgment, wrong. The moral welfare of the convict is but little more improved than in the first case.

THIRD — ENTIRE ABOLITION OF CONVICT LABOR.

It is generally conceded by experts upon the question of the moral welfare of the convict, that a certain amount of physical employment is necessary to produce the best results in their moral welfare, and I think there is no question but what they should have a certain amount of physical employment.

FOURTH — THE EMPLOYMENT OF CONVICT LABOR IN TEACHING THEM USEFUL TRADES.

The convicts should be taught the various trades—the shoemaker's, blacksmith's, carpenter's, wagonmaker's, cabinetmaker's—in fact, all of the useful trades, but should be taught these trades from their very foundation. The shoemaker should be taught to take the leather, and produce a pair of boots or shoes; the blacksmith and carpenter should be taught to produce all the intricate work of their trades; the wagonmaker *should be taught to take a log of wood and produce therefrom the hubs, spokes, felloes and gearing, and be able to put them together and make a complete wagon*, ready for ironing; the cabinetmaker should be taught to take his material from the log and produce the various articles of his trade. All of this work should be done *without the aid of power machinery*, or, in fact, machinery of any kind. The convicts should be excluded from one another, and come into contact only with people whose *moral influence will be elevating*. (Applause.) A certain portion of the day should be employed in their mental cultivation. The result of this plan will be, when their term of incarceration expires, they are fitted to lead the lives of moral men. The trades that they have learned will be the means of their finding employment. The intellectual and moral cultivation that they have received will lift them to a higher plane of life than they have ever known, and if they have any wish to reform, the foundation for reformation is laid. The product of their labor, upon this plan, is so inconsiderable, that it does not enter into competition with the labor of the free workingman. The trades which they should be taught are those in which the articles they make shall be those which are most needed by the convicts themselves. The weaver should make the cloth, the shoemaker the shoes, for their fellow-convicts, and so on until all the necessities of the convicts are supplied.

I heartily recommend the last view of the case as a practical solution of the problem. (Applause.)

Introduced by the Chair, Mr. FRANK A. FLOWER, Wisconsin, Commissioner of Labor and Industry, of Madison, remarked:

GENTLEMEN:—I have but little to offer, and perhaps nothing of value. I am neither a manufacturer nor a professional agitator—merely a *searcher after facts—truth*. But no one, I think, can fail to be impressed with the fact that this meeting of manufacturers, agents and students constitutes by far the most dignified and practical

move yet made toward dealing with the important prison labor problem in an intelligent manner.

Heretofore the subject has been *bandied about mostly by brawlers and demagogues*, intent on securing the votes of wage-earners, and nothing else, and their methods have not gone beyond denunciation and misrepresentation. These tactics must be entirely remote from all we say and do here.

CRIMINALS, LIKE THE POOR, WE HAVE ALWAYS WITH US; and we must go slowly and carefully about the work of establishing an employment system for them, because, if what we evolve shall not stand the test of time and of the public weal, we shall appear in history as impractical and hare-brained reformers—mere disturbers.

I am not anxious to go into that record. In discussing this question there are

SEVERAL THINGS I DO NOT INTEND TO FORGET,

namely:

First—That crime is a permanent, not a new and temporary institution.

Second—That employing prisoners, under contract or otherwise, on a few branches of manufacture, *must of necessity compete, to some extent, with private enterprise* in those branches, compelling them, therefore, to bear more than their share of public burdens. (Applause.)

Third—That the contract system is undoubtedly the best for the State treasury.

Fourth—That any change we may be likely to make or advocate will increase the cash cost of prison management.

Fifth—That in the matter of reform and education we should consider the *welfare of those outside of the prison* in preference to, and before, that of those inside of it.

The problem is, indeed, a perplexing one; but I am firmly of the opinion that we should

SEARCH OUT THE ARTICLES USED

by us that are made mostly or entirely in foreign countries—articles not yet engaging the enterprise, capital and skill of America, and set our convicts at work to manufacture them.

Whatever price we might fix upon such articles would interfere with no dealer or manufacturer—injure no one.

I think this proposition will stand almost any test. (Applause.)

Mr. J. C. BIRGE, President of the Seymour Manufacturing Co., of St. Louis, addressed the Convention as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT:—The criminal classes, whether in or out of prison, are of necessity a burden to the community, and any plan aiming to make them profitable or productive will fail so long as honest, free labor must struggle and still find it difficult to earn for itself a livelihood. It should not be expected that prison labor can support itself and, in addition thereto, furnish a revenue to the State. If manufacturers employing free labor cannot produce a good article

for less than a certain fixed price, the State should not make concessions to contractors of prison labor, which will enable them to place similar products on the market at a less price than the products of free labor.

ASIDE FROM THE IDEA OF REFORMATION,

the imprisonment of these dangerous characters is the protection of the community from their acts, and it should be a recognized principle that this reformatory discipline will be an expense to the State, for the reason that the State tolerates and licenses establishments from which it derives a revenue, and which establishments are the chief cause of the vices which develop the criminal classes.

Instead of recognizing these facts, certain States have organized their convicts into slave gangs, and sold their services at one-fourth the price per day for which regular labor can be obtained, to be put in competition with free mechanics and artisans. The purchasers of this labor are not required, as in ante-bellum days, to invest capital in these slaves or in the factories where they are to be worked, because the free tax payers of the State (including the manufacturers themselves)

PROVIDE ALL THAT IS NECESSARY

for maintaining this competition from the prisons, which is so destructive to their own prosperity. (Hear!)

It has been said here that this prison labor is offered to the highest bidder, and as all manufacturers have an opportunity to bid, no one should complain if it be bought for less than its value. It may be stated in reply to this proposition, that no one but a manufacturer is competent to manufacture. Now as most manufacturers have plants for their own purpose, there is little advantage in *working themselves into the rings*, to secure prison labor, and with it another factory to compete against the business which they already have established. This is especially true, as few managers of free labor believe they have the experience which would qualify them to manage the slave or prison laborer as profitably as those who are already in the ring, and have enjoyed that experience. It must be remembered that the State, in most cases, furnishes not only the factory, but the power, making a saving to the contractor of many important elements of cost, such as fuel, engineer, fireman, watchman, taxes, insurance and other expenses.

THE SERIOUS FEATURE

both to the State, the employee and the manufacturer, is that a large amount of cheap goods is poured upon the market, and as the prison contractor cannot profitably stop his production nor regulate his output, in times like these, free labor manufacturers must discharge their workmen and limit their production. (Hear!)

It has been the policy of our Government to protect our industries by a tariff levied upon imported products, which are manufactured by the cheap labor of other countries. Admitting

THE WISDOM OF THIS POLICY,

is it judicious for the States, at the expense of the people, to build and capitalize extensive factories, and fill them with slave labor,

producing with all modern appliances vast quantities of goods, for the manufacture of which regular manufacturers have already made ample provision, resulting in an overstocked market? In doing this, regular manufacturers, who have furnished employment for honest laborers, find that for every prison laborer one of their free artisans must be displaced. This seems to be a policy the reverse of protection and suicidal to domestic free industry.

I, THEREFORE, URGE

that as industry is necessary to the moral improvement of the convicts, and as hand labor affords a greater opportunity for their development than the use of automatic machines, that *they should be required to manufacture only by hand and tools, without the use of machinery*, which of itself displaces many workmen. It would seem best, as has already been said, that the work be directed as far as possible, as suggested by Mr. Redfield and Mr. Flower, toward the production of goods not made in this country. In any event, the plan would prevent the production of vast quantities of goods through the aid of the State *without reference to the demand*, the same to be sold at prices which paralyze free manufactures, and cause the *mechanic* who is dependent on his own hands for support to *live less comfortably than the convict* who is supposed to be paying the penalty of his crimes.

If this is to be

A GOVERNMENT "FOR THE PEOPLE"

the welfare of the free artisan who is "of the people" cannot properly be ignored by placing in the hands of rings or cliques the earnings of convict labor. This may prove as fatal to general prosperity as the enormous consolidation of railroad, telegraph and mining capital, which is often used to crush out growing industries yet in their infancy. (Applause.)

The Committee on Constitution and By-Laws, here submitted their report and the following

PROPOSED CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

The persons whose names are hereunto subscribed have mutually formed themselves into a society called the NATIONAL ————— ASSOCIATION.

ARTICLE II.

The object of this Association shall be the thorough investigation of the subject of convict labor, for the purpose of discovering, and securing the adoption of, that method of employing the inmates of our prisons in the various states, which shall be least burdensome

and least oppressive to manufacturing interests—all proper conditions considered.

ARTICLE III.

Any person in sympathy with the objects of this Association, may become a member by subscribing to the Constitution and paying to the Treasurer the fees determined upon by the Convention.

ARTICLE IV.

The officers of this Association shall consist of a President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, and an Executive Committee of seven, to be chosen by ballot at each regular annual meeting, to hold office for one year, and until their successors in office are chosen.

ARTICLE V.

Regular meetings shall be held annually, at a place and time decided upon at a previous regular meeting, by a majority of the members present.

ARTICLE VI.

For the purpose of propagandism, or to expedite the transaction of business, the President may appoint such special or standing committees as may be deemed proper.

ARTICLE VII.

The Vice-President of each State and Territory shall have power to organize such Associations for his State or Territory, or appoint such Committees to prosecute the local work in his State or Territory, as he may deem best.

ARTICLE VIII.

These Articles, or any By-Laws made in pursuance of them, may be altered, repealed or amended, by a two-thirds vote of all the members present, at any regular meeting of the Association.

On motion the report was received.

Mr. BIRGE moved that the Articles of the Constitution be read and acted upon separately.—Carried.

On motion, the question of a name for the Association was referred to a Committee of five, the Chair appointing as such Committee Messrs. J. C. Birge, C. H. Lee, John Driver, Christoph Hotz, and J. W. Hinton.

Pending the report of the committee, the Hon. Jonathan Perine made some remarks, which we regret were not reported for this publication.

The committee reported as a name the "NATIONAL ANTI-CONVICT-CONTRACT ASSOCIATION," which being inserted in the first article, it was adopted.

The second article was amended to read as follows, and then adopted: "Its object shall be the thorough investigation of the subject of convict-labor, for the purpose of discovering and securing the adoption of that method of employing prison population in the various states, which shall be least burdensome to all labor, and least oppressive to manufacturing interests, all proper conditions considered.

Mr. ROSENFELD moved that the annual fee for manufacturers and others be five dollars, and for workingmen twenty-five cents.

Mr. DRIVER moved to amend by making the fee of manufacturers ten (\$10.00) dollars.

Carried.

A motion to amend by making the fee for workingmen fifty cents, was also carried.

It was moved that the fee for merchants and professional men be five (\$5.00) dollars.

Carried.

Mr. HOTZ moved that any association of workingmen may be admitted as a body to this association on payment of five dollars (\$5.00) annually, and be entitled to be represented by one delegate.

Carried.

The third article, as amended, was then adopted.

Mr. HOTZ moved the adoption of Article IV.

Mr. UPTON moved to amend by providing for one Vice-President from each state and territory.

Carried.

Article IV, as amended, was then adopted.

Articles V and VI were read, and on motion, separately adopted.

VII. The Vice-President of each State and Territory shall have power to organize State or Territorial Associations, or appoint committees to prosecute the local work in his own State or Territory, as he may deem best. Adopted.

Article VIII was on motion amended to read as follows: "These articles, or any By-Laws made in pursuance of them, may be altered, repealed or amended by a two-thirds vote of all the members present at any regular meeting, or at any special meeting called for the purpose. Adopted.

Mr. UPTON moved the adoption of the Constitution, as now amended, as a whole.

Carried.

CONSTITUTION AS ADOPTED.

ARTICLE I.

The persons whose names are hereto subscribed, have mutually

CONSTITUTION AS ADOPTED.

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formed themselves into the NATIONAL ANTI-CONVICT-CONTRACT ASSOCIATION.

ARTICLE II.

ITS OBJECT shall be the thorough investigation of the subject of convict labor, for the purpose of discovering and securing the adoption of that method of employing prison population in the various states, which shall be the least burdensome to all labor and least oppressive to manufacturing interests—all proper conditions considered.

ARTICLE III.

Any person in sympathy with the objects of the Association may BECOME A MEMBER by subscribing to the Constitution, and paying an annual fee to the treasurer.

The annual fee shall be as follows, viz:

For MANUFACTURERS, - - - - -	\$10 00
" ANY ASSOCIATION OF WORKINGMEN, to be represented by one delegate, - - - -	5 00
" MERCHANTS AND PROFESSIONAL MEN, - - -	5 00
" MECHANICS, WORKINGMEN, and others interested, - - - - -	50

ARTICLE IV.

THE OFFICERS OF THIS ASSOCIATION shall consist of a President, one Vice-President from each state and territory, a Secretary, Treasurer and an Executive Committee of seven, to be chosen by ballot at each regular annual meeting, who shall hold office one year, and until their successors in office are elected.

ARTICLE V.

REGULAR MEETINGS shall be held annually at a place and time decided upon at a previous regular meeting, by a majority of the members present.

ARTICLE VI.

For the purpose of propagandism, or to expedite the transaction of business, the President may appoint such SPECIAL OR STANDING COMMITTEES, as may be deemed proper.

ARTICLE VII.

The VICE-PRESIDENT of each State and Territory shall have power to organize State or Territorial Associations, or appoint committees to prosecute the local work in his own State or Territory, as he may deem best.

ARTICLE VIII.

THESE ARTICLES and any By-Laws made in pursuance of them, may be altered, repealed, or amended by a two-third vote of all the

members present at any regular meeting, or at a special meeting called for the purpose.

After the adoption of the Constitution, it was moved and seconded that the Association proceed to elect its officers.

Carried.

Moved, that Mr. W. T. LEWIS be the President of the Association.

Carried.

Moved, that we elect Vice-Presidents to-day from States represented, and that the one from Illinois be First Vice-President.

Carried.

Mr. GEO. S. REDFIELD was nominated for Vice-President for Illinois, but declined on the ground of inability to give the time necessary to the work, and named as substitute Mr. CHRISTOPH HOTZ, who was unanimously elected.

Following are the names of gentlemen elected Vice-Presidents, and the States which they represent:

CHRISTOPH HOTZ, First Vice-President for Illinois.

F. J. UPTON, Vice-President for Iowa.

W. C. NONES, Vice-President for Kentucky.

CLEMENT STUDEBAKER, Vice-President for Indiana.

JNO. W. HINTON, Vice-President for Wisconsin.

J. C. BIRGE, Vice-President for Missouri.

H. M. KINNEY, Vice-President for Minnesota.

J. H. WINSPEAR, Vice-President for Nebraska.

Mr. HINTON requested that CHAS. T. BRADLEY be Vice-President in his place. Substitute accepted.

J. H. WHITING, Vice-President for Michigan.

GEO. E. DILLEY, Vice-President for Texas.

Upon the completion of the list of Vice-Presidents, Mr. GEO. S. REDFIELD was named for Secretary of the Association.

Mr. REDFIELD again declined, saying that the Secretary was necessarily a working and a salaried officer, and that his pressing business engagements would not permit him to perform the services required.

The Convention expressed a desire to have the Secretary located in Chicago, and urged Mr. REDFIELD to accept the office, with the assurance of a paid Assistant Secretary, to do the work under his supervision, and also any other assistants which he might find necessary.

Upon these conditions, and further, that President LEWIS would promptly respond to his call for consultation, Mr. REDFIELD accepted the nomination for Secretary, and was unanimously elected.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

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President LEWIS assured the Secretary elect of his hearty co-operation and support.

Mr. REDFIELD was also elected Treasurer of the Association.

Mr. MILLER moved that the President and Vice-Presidents present, nominate an Executive Committee.

Carried.

The following names were presented, and duly elected:

CHAS. H. DEERE, of Moline, Illinois.

GEO. M. CURTIS, of Clinton, Iowa.

GEO. BERKEY, of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

STEPHEN BULL, of Racine, Wisconsin.

JAMES A. SEXTON, of Chicago.

J. L. SMYSER, of Louisville, Kentucky.

Vice-President W. C. NONES offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

Resolved, That the Executive Committee be instructed to inquire into the constitutionality of a law, to be passed by the Congress of the United States, prohibiting the sale of goods—the product of convict labor—outside of the state in which manufactured, and no constitutional objections being found, that they be instructed to obtain the passage of such a law by Congress.

Vice-President H. M. KINNEY moved that the Secretary be instructed to issue a circular letter to all prominent manufacturers, merchants and labor organizations and others, requesting them to consider the object of this Association, and join in its work.

Carried.

The following resolution was offered by Mr. WRIGHT, and, on motion, adopted:

Resolved, That this Association favors the adoption of one or more Federal prisons, not upon the labor-contract system, in order to withdraw from state prisons the Federal prisoners now confined in them, who are largely worked upon the contract system, and to give the influence of the Federal Government to a better system of prison labor.

Mr. FLOWER introduced the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Chair appoint a Committee of five to FORMULATE A METHOD OF EMPLOYING CONVICT LABOR, to take the place of the contract and lease systems, which shall be less oppressive to the labor and industrial interests of this country, and that this Committee report before January 1st, 1887, in order to enable the members of the Association to present the plan, or plans, to the various State Legislatures, which will assemble soon after that date.

This resolution was adopted, and the Chair appointed the following gentlemen as such committee:

FRANK A. FLOWER, GEO. S. REDFIELD, C. STUDEBAKER, A. O. WRIGHT, and C. H. LEE.

The following resolution was offered by Mr. F. J. UPTON, and adopted:

Resolved, That we urgently request Congress to prohibit, by law, the purchase of any goods produced, in whole or in part, by convict labor, for the use of any department of the Federal Government.

It was moved —

That our present Secretary be authorized to cast a ballot for all officers elected to-day.

Carried.

The Secretary cast the ballot.

It was moved and carried —

That the time and place of special meetings be left to the President and Secretary.

Mr. ROSENFELD moved —

That the President be authorized to extend a vote of thanks to the proprietor of the Grand Pacific Hotel for the use of the room, and for other courtesies.

Carried.

On motion of Mr. C. H. MOORE, the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That the *Executive Committee* empower the Secretary to send printed copies of the proceedings of this Convention to the members of the Legislature of each State and Territory, to each member of Congress and U. S. Senator and also to each Labor Organization, both local and National, in the United States.

Resolved, That the Executive Committee shall appear in person, or by attorney, before the Legislatures of the different States when in session, and present, in the ablest manner possible, the evils of the present convict-labor system, and offer the best possible arguments to cause the present competition between convict and free labor to cease. Carried.

On motion, the Convention adjourned *sine die*.

APPROVED.



PRESIDENT.



SECRETARY, *pro tem*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

GOVERNOR BEGOLE'S VIEWS OF THE CONVICT-CONTRACT LABOR QUESTION.

FLINT, MICH., Sept. 2, 1886.

GEO. S. REDFIELD, ESQ., *Secretary N. A. C. C. Association:*
MY DEAR SIR:

I have the pleasure of being in receipt of your letter of the 27th. of August. I have just read the report in the *Chicago Daily News* of the National Anti-Convict-Contract Association held at the Grand Pacific hotel last week. I must heartily approve of the action taken at that convention, especially the speeches made condemning the contact which honest labor suffers at the hands of convict-contract labor. No manufacturer who pays his workmen living wages can compete with convict labor at from forty to sixty cents per day, with buildings and shops fully furnished by the State.

In my inaugural address, and also in my outgoing message to the Legislature of Michigan, I recommended the entire abolition of the contract system in our prisons, as being antagonistic to the welfare of the honest laboring people of this commonwealth.

I very much regret that pressing engagements prevented my attendance at your convention. It would have afforded me great pleasure to have given the convention my views, based upon my experience with the prisons of Michigan.

I am, dear sir,

Yours very respectfully,

JOSIAH W. BEGOLE,

Ex-Governor of Michigan.

RECTORY OF CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION,
FERNWOOD, 103d. St., Chicago,

Nov. 1st., 1886.

G. S. REDFIELD, ESQ., *Secretary N. A. C. C. Association:*
DEAR SIR:—Although the National Anti-Convict-Contract Association was organized for purely commercial reasons, and aims only to correct an evil which affects trade and industry, it happily finds itself supported by those who approach the question of the proper employment of convict labor from other points of interest and observation.

The subject is many-sided, and it will not detract from its economic and commercial interest to note some of the aspects which it presents to those who view it from other standpoints.

FIRST — HUMANITY.

The convicted criminal is still a man, and though deprived of his liberty for the security of society, he has personal rights which the state is bound to protect. For instance—though sentenced to “*hard labor*,” such labor must be reasonable, and not exceed the physical capacity of the man. Because he has been sentenced to restraint and to hard work, no one HAS A RIGHT TO KILL HIM by excessive demands upon his endurance. A keeper or contractor who knowingly and deliberately works a convict to death is guilty of murder.

Death was not the penalty which the law pronounced against him, and no one has a right to inflict that penalty upon him.

The convict-contract system puts the prisoner completely in the hands of the contractor, who has no other interest in him than to get all the work out of him possible. The convict, by this contract system, has been CONVERTED INTO A SLAVE, “owing service and labor” to the man who has bought him for a term of years—if he last so long. The state, in short, turns him over to an irresponsible man, who is not an officer of the law, who is not charged with the duty of seeing the penalty pronounced by the court inflicted, and who cares for none of the ends for which the prisoner suffers privation of liberty, but only for his serviceableness in PUTTING MONEY IN THE CONTRACTOR’S POCKET. It is not, therefore, matter of surprise that those who believe that the convict in prison is entitled to *humane treatment* should protest against the contract system on

PURELY HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS,
and that they should give to this Association their cordial support.

SECOND — THE CONVICT’S REFORM.

Some one has said, “The criminal has rights, and chiefly the right of reformation.”

The criminal not only has this right, but to the community and to the State his *reform* is of the first importance. The *prevention* of crime must always be preferred to the *punishment* of crime.

The State must always prefer that men should be *honest and free*, rather than *dishonest and imprisoned*.

It is, therefore, both

THE DUTY AND THE WISDOM

of the State, to regard the convict not so much as a criminal, to be *punished*, as a wrong-doer, to be *corrected*. The State has no right to subject the convict to a *regime* which tends to *harden* instead of to *reform* him. That the contract system

DISREGARDS ALL CLAIMS OF THE CONVICT

for treatment for reform, is conceded on all hands.

The State thus, for the sake of "getting its money back," consents to sell the convict into slavery, and submit him to conditions which most certainly prevent reform.

Mr. RICHARD VAUX, President of the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, says:

"COMPULSORY LABOR IN PRISON, FOR PROFIT, IS SIMPLY SLAVERY."

This the convict—sold to a contractor—feels, and the belief that he is subjected to this wrong, tends to harden him; and he leaves the prison when his term expires, with the feeling that *he has been wronged*, and resolves "to get even" with society, which has thus converted him into a machine to minister to a contractor's greed.

JOHN HOWARD, the great prison reformer, said: "*To reform prisoners, or to make them better as to their morals, should always be the leading view in every house of correction, and their earnings should only be a secondary object.*"

ALEXANDER MACHONCHIE, of whom Dr. E. C. Wines said that he is "the profoundest, the most original, and at the same time the most practical of thinkers on the penitentiary question," says:

"The truth is, that we do not as yet sufficiently value THE OBJECT OF REFORM IN OUR PRISONS, and hence our failure in obtaining it.

"By right arrangements, and with God's blessing, *we may approach indefinitely near to the reform of ALL our criminals.*

"Once let officers understand that their business is *to reform their fellowmen, not merely to punish them*, and they would soon become inventive as to specific methods. But the principle must be established first.

"To seek well and wisely, THE REFORM OF OUR CRIMINALS, we must inflict on them all the suffering that is really necessary for example, and realize that we are not entitled to do more—*we may not do evil that good may come.*

"Multiplied and unnatural restrictions lead to multiplied and unnatural transgressions. VINDICTIVE PERSONAL PUNISHMENTS corrupt

far beyond their immediate sphere. They appeal to the craven feelings of men, *and they much more generally stimulate their ferocious and sensual ones.*"

"Vindictive personal punishment" seems almost inseparable from the contract system.

The working of the system may be easily discerned: The contractor wishes to get the *most money possible* out of his investment; the contractor's overseer *wishes to stand well* with his employer, and must therefore get the *most work out of the convict* practicable; the burdens put on the convict are often more than he can bear; the *prisoner is subjected to punishment*, either by order of the contractor's overseer or of the prison keeper, who is generally in sympathy with, and controlled by, the contractor's representative; and thus HARSH AND BARBAROUS TREATMENT effectually bars all influences for reform.

That this is not an extravagant view, unsupported by facts, is plain, from the opposition of all prison reformers to the contract system. The recently published report of the "BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS," of Illinois, contains the following:

"THE PRISON REFORMERS AND SOCIAL SCIENTISTS,

in a word, the experts in penology, who have devoted their lives to the study of the interests of the criminal classes as related to the welfare of society, and are therefore the highest authority upon the subject, *demand the removal of the contractor because of the hindrance his presence offers to the most wise and effectual treatment of the prisoner as a ward of the State.*

It is deemed essential, both to disciplinary and reformatory success in prison management, that the convict shall REMAIN UNDER THE SOLE SUPERVISION, GUIDANCE AND CONTROL OF THE OFFICERS OF THE STATE, whose laws have been violated, and whose social welfare has been jeopardized. It is to society as represented by the State, that penalties are due, and the officer charged with the correction of the criminal should, it is believed, *exercise his functions untrammelled by any foreign agencies or influences.*"

As further confirmatory of the views here expressed, I take great pleasure in quoting the following valuable testimonials from gentlemen who may be regarded as *experts* in penal matters, taken, also, from the Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of Illinois:

REV. F. H. WINES, Secretary of the State Board of Charities of Illinois, says:

"Now the objections which penologists see to the contract system of labor in prisons is that IT IS A GREAT OBSTACLE, if not an insuperable obstacle, to the introduction of a truly reformatory prison discipline, for which they have for a hundred years been anxiously and earnestly contending. They can never give their consent to it.

The utmost that can be asked of them is passive endurance of it, as a social evil, sure in time to be overthrown by the advance of a higher intelligence and a more unselfish standard of morality. They are even disposed almost to welcome the agitation of the labor question, in so far as it may serve to attract the attention of the thoughtful to the great question—the paramount question in government, little as may be the heed given to it by the public—

HOW CAN WE DIMINISH THE VOLUME OF CRIME

in the community? * * * That the prison system, as it is administered, is to a great extent a failure is admitted on all hands. We believe that a better system would have a different effect, and it is the hope of a better which makes us desire the radical reconstruction of the system, the evils of which we know and deplore."

MR. W. M. F. ROUNDS, Secretary of the National Prison Association, in discussing convict labor issues, thus treats of the contract system:

"Under this system *the contractor becomes the owner* of the time of the prisoners. It is his legitimate aim to make money out of that time. He becomes to the prisoner the most manifest power in the prison.

THE CONTRACTOR'S RIGHTS MUST BE CONSERVED.

Then the motive that governs the whole internal machinery of that prison is not the protection of society, by the reformation of the criminal, but is the right of the contractor to make the largest possible amount of money by any means within the terms of the contract. The criminal feels not the *beneficent majesty of the State*, but the mercenary power of the contractor. It always may happen, and often does happen, that the discipline of the prison must yield to the demands of the contractor. Indeed, the very warden

MUST YIELD TO THE AUTOCRACY OF THE CONTRACT,

and in the working hours admit that there is a power in the prison stronger than his own. * * * The interest of the contractor is *promoted by the non-reformation of criminals*. The most persistent criminal who most frequently returns to the prison, becomes the best trained and consequently most profitable workman. *It is not the contractor's interest that he should cease to be a criminal*, but that he should return to the prison, as speedily as possible. Hence the motive power that dominates the labor of the prison, opposes itself to the reformation of the prisoner, and thus opposes itself to the highest interests of society."

Mr. A. G. BYERS, warden of the Ohio penitentiary, with experience in the contract and other systems of prison labor, makes this comment on the former:

"It is at this point where the

MORE OBJECTIONABLE FEATURES OF THE CONTRACT SYSTEM

become apparent. It is not merely the intervening of a third party between the officers of the prison and the prisoner, but the further fact that this party by virtue of his contract is invested with *certain rights—property rights*.—in the time of the prisoner, and property

interests in his work, whereas the prison officer has ordinarily no interest in the prisoner beyond his safe custody and the enforcement of the labor due the contractor.

"The contractor deals with the State—the State strong and exacting—and it is his business to make the most of his bargain. Thus the prisoner is brought into CONTACT WITH A MERCENARY SPIRIT whose demands are enforced by State authority, with the *club, scourge, hose, pistol or some other brutal device*, utterly degrading to manhood, and which merely awakens a *revengeful spirit and sets at defiance all hope of reform.*"

Hon. Z. R. BROCKWAY, superintendent of the Elmira Reformatory, New York, says:

"On the other hand THE CONTRACT SYSTEM IS OBJECTIONABLE because * * * it often divides the controlling authority of the prison, introducing an influence, political or otherwise, which dominates the prison officers and determines the discipline of the establishment. Its tendency is to drive the prisoner along a single process of routine work, with little regard to preparation for future industrial success when released. In short, the contract system in principle and practice is OPPOSED TO THE REAL PURPOSE for which the State maintains its penitentiaries, namely, protection from crimes through the reformation of offenders."

These statements, which might readily be multiplied, sufficiently indicate the grounds upon which very excellent authorities in the science of prison management *condemn the contract system.*

Nof to trespass too much upon your attention, I beg to assure you, that approaching this question from the standpoint of humanity, and the reform of the convict, I am heartily with you in your efforts to abolish "the convict-contract" system in our prisons and penitentiaries.

Very truly yours,
L. D. MANSFIELD.

MR. F. J. UPTON'S VIEWS.

The following letter has been received from F. J. UPTON, Esq., President of the Star Wagon Company, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa:
GEO. S. REDFIELD, Esq., *Secretary, etc., Chicago:*

MY DEAR SIR—In response to your letter, asking my opinion in regard to convict labor, and what should be done with the convicts if not let out on contract, as now practiced, I am of the opinion that it will not be wise to ask for the abolition of convict labor, nor do I think it would be for the best. The convicts should be made to work, and thus by their labor they should be compelled to pay the State all they cost it.

What ought to be done, is to stop the contracting out their labor at a *minimum sum to favored parties*—often to some

MEMBER OF A POLITICAL RING

—which enables them to produce goods, and put them on the market at a price that would be ruinous to those that produced the same line of goods by free labor.

It is not the *amount of work* the convicts do that causes the great injustice to free labor, but the *destruction of the market*.

The question for us to consider is: what plan can we adopt and recommend that will put a stop to the present system of contracting out convict labor, and at the same time keep them employed, *without disturbing the market*.

I would suggest that they

PRODUCE EVERYTHING OF A PUBLIC NATURE

that the State, county or town consume. In other words, keep them at work for the public as far as practicable.

Why could they not do all the public printing and binding, prepare material for public buildings and bridges, make macadam for streets and public roads, when practicable; make and repair roads, build scrapers and road machines for the use of the States, etc.?

If employed on other than upon our public works, teach them, (especially the younger ones,) some useful trade, so they can become skilled workmen, without the use of machinery. If they produce goods for the market, let the State control the selling, and not allow them to be sold at a less price than the same line of goods can be sold at if produced by free labor.

ONE GOOD TRADE TO TEACH THEM

is to be skilled cutters of clothing. Let them practice by cutting and making convicts clothes. Skilled cutters are few, and hard to find in these times.

Again, a farm might be attached to the prison, and a certain class of convicts be made to raise provisions for prison use.

THE STATE SHOULD PROVIDE SCHOOLS,

and employ part of their time in useful instructions, that would elevate them, if possible, and prepare them to become useful citizens when they go out into the world, and endeavor to lift them up and make men of them.

The State has, or

SHOULD HAVE TWO OBJECTS

in their confinement, viz: First, to protect society; second, to reform the criminal. But in doing so, they should not adopt a system that would work a great injustice to honest men outside the prison, and have a tendency to make criminals of some of them.

The above are crude suggestions, which I give for what they are worth. Some plan must be found to stop the great wrong of contracting convict labor.

Yours Respectfully,

F. J. UPTON.

Mr. L. E. MONTGOMERY makes the following excellent suggestion in reference to the employment of convicts and tramps:

"SPRINGFIELD, ILL., Aug. 30, 1886.

"MR. G. S. REDFIELD, *Secretary National Anti-Convict-Contract Association, Chicago*:

DEAR SIR:—I note the meeting of your Association on the 27th. inst. I would suggest the following:

"Take convict, tramp, and prison labor, of every character, and construct public pike roads with it. The plan is feasible, and there is good in it for all concerned. Details, such as distribution, location, etc., can easily be arranged. Take our own State, for instance; there is stone enough in the northern part to pike the loamy agricultural sections—every ten, twenty (any number) of miles apart.

"Legitimate labor is thus relieved of convict competition, and any good there is in it goes to the public.

"Very respectfully yours,

"L. E. MONTGOMERY."

WHAT AN EX-CONVICT THINKS.

The following letter will not be without suggestion and interest, though coming from an ex-convict. It is hardly necessary to say that the Secretary did not think it judicious to avail himself of the services offered. For obvious reasons, the writer must remain *incognito*.

"CHICAGO, AUGUST 27th., 1886.

"GEO. S. REDFIELD, ESQ., *City*:

DEAR SIR:—I have just finished reading the proceedings of the National Convention for the abolition of contract labor in State prison, with much interest. Seeing that you have been elected Secretary and Treasurer, with power to employ an assistant to do the work under your supervision, I thought I would apply to you for that position. I presume you will smile when I tell you what my qualifications for that position are, and the very facts and experiences, which make me competent for this kind of work may defeat me in this direction. However, "Nothing ventured, nothing had." My interest in this thing is not altogether a pecuniary one, for if I could but

BURST UP THE CONTRACT SYSTEM

in one single state, I would give my undivided time and attention to it, for at least six months, *without any compensation whatever*. What makes me competent for the position, is the many years (seven) which I have spent as a convict in the Minnesota penitentiary at Stillwater. I have a very intimate acquaintance with at least the

METHODS OF ONE PRISON RING,

and I suppose there is not a State in the Union, that has not also a prison ring. When Mr. A. O. Wright, of Madison, Wis., mentioned *one Senator*, as owing his place in the United States Senate to the

influence of a prison ring, I think he should have said at least *two*. Now sir, if you want a clerk, who knows something about the methods of those people, I am your man. I am not, as you see, a good penman, but I can write a legible hand, and that should be sufficient. I am also somewhat acquainted with the literature bearing on this subject. I believe I could make myself as useful to you, and the cause you and your fellow manufacturers are engaged in, as any other man in this city. I should suppose you would prefer a man who knew something about this subject, to a mere penman; and as it would be very congenial work for me, I apply to you for the position. I don't, of course, know just what you require in a clerk, but I have told you, that I am an ex-convict, and as to my present honesty, it is something that my *mere word* won't establish. I have been a pretty energetic burglar; but I would a little rather, at present, burst prison rings than to burst safes.

I have been shot nearly all to pieces, and am now suffering from a wound received in Minnesota, while resisting arrest. So you see I am quite honest with you, at least. I don't suppose that there is much money in such a position, but it would give me intense satisfaction to show up some of

THOSE PRETENTIOUS OLD HUMBUGS

connected with prison and prison rings. Although I have been "a thoroughbred" while in the business, I would much prefer to be an honest man. And I will add one more suggestion: *Don't depend on the information you may get from prison officials, for if they were honest men*

THE CONTRACT SYSTEM COULD NOT EXIST.

If you think that I would suit you for this position, drop me a line to-morrow, and I will come and see you. Hoping you will favor me with a line in either case at your earliest convenience,

I am yours truly,

MORE FROM CONVICT EXPERIENCE.

The following letter will show something of the abuses which exist under the convict-contract system in one of our State prisons; also, from the stand-point of a convict. We clip from *The Republican and News*, of Marshfield, Wis.:

"MARSHFIELD, Wis., March 4.

"*To the Editor of The Republican and News:*

"My attention was attracted by an article in your paper of a recent issue, on the cost of prison food, by Col. Geo. W. Carter, Warden of the Wisconsin State prison, at Waupun. By the Colonel's showing, it costs the State less than four cents a meal to feed able-bodied laboring men in the prison. Now, as I am one of those who believe that the people of the State of Wisconsin are lovers of fair play, and willing to

'GIVE EVEN THE DEVIL HIS DUE,'

I propose to give you a slight sketch of the manner in which the

convicts in that place are worked, and when, by his own showing, the warden feeds them at an expense to the State of less than four cents a meal, thoughtful minds may well ask themselves: 'Are we living under a republican form of government in the nineteenth century, or in some mediæval age?'

"I served a year in Waupun for a trivial offence; but I am willing to admit it was deserved on my part, if only the sentence of the court had been carried out; but, when the warden will construe a sentence of 'one year's hard labor' to mean one year of torture of the most infernal kind that the human mind can invent, then I think I did not deserve it. I will now proceed to give you a history of that year, and I will not overdraw the picture in the least; I could not, if I would. Words cannot convey anything like an adequate idea of the tricks and devices resorted to by the class of men who accept positions as foremen in prison shops *under the contract system* of labor, to torture the convicts.

To begin with: A few days after my arrival at Waupun, I was conducted to shop No. 7, the treeing-room. You are doubtless aware that boots and shoes are the staple products of Waupun.

M. D. WELLS & CO., OF CHICAGO, ARE THE CONTRACTORS,

and pay sixty cents per day for prison laborers. I was, as I say, taken to the treeing-room, to be initiated into the mysteries of treeing boots. I was told by the foreman that the task was to tree forty pairs of boots per day; that I must tree just that number, and not any more; I was not to remain any time idle, but must be constantly at work, and if the task was completed before the hour at which we knocked off work, I must clean up my work-bench, wash out the sponges, etc., so as to be doing something. He also told me the way to tree boots was to rub the leather full of water with a hard sponge, which he furnished me for the purpose, and then with the treeing-stick rub the boot with all the strength I possessed until I got it smooth. Of course, I did not imagine the fellow would lie to me, and so I went to work as I was told, and I can say truthfully I did my level best to give him satisfaction.

Matters went on all right for a month or six weeks. Then the foreman began finding fault with my work, saying it was not properly done, and every two or three days he would bring me a half-dozen pairs of boots that I must tree over again, in addition to doing my task. If I asked for an explanation of what I had failed to do, none was given; I was simply told to do them over again, and do my task also. Pretty soon the boots began to accumulate on my hands, and I could not rub out the task and *at the same time do half of the previous day's task over the second time.* The consequence was, when I failed to do so,

I WAS SENT TO THE DARK CELL,

and kept there eight days on *one ounce of bread and two quarts of water per day.* At the expiration of the eight days, I was released from the dark cell, excused from work for half a day by the doctor, and then sent to the shop again, when the task had to be done as usual, and, as soon as the foreman thought I had sufficiently recov-

ered from the effects of the punishment I had endured, he would prepare the blacking, used by us, in such a way that the work could not be properly done anyhow. Then he again reported me to the keeper, who, in turn, reported me to the deputy warden, and

I WAS SENT TO THE DUNGEON

there to remain for another week on the same amount of food as previously stated, and when it was ascertained that *I could no longer endure the dark cell*, I was released and sent to work in the shop, with orders to do my task at all hazards. This sort of thing was kept up until I had been in the dark cell forty-three days out of the 365 of my sentence. I made complaint to the warden that I was being improperly punished by the foreman. I asked him to inquire into the matter. I told him if he did not see to it that I got fair play and something like justice,

I WOULD KILL THE FOREMAN

if by so doing I should be obliged to take my own life, in order to avoid the torture that would result from such a course. The result of this was a stoppage of the punishment for a few weeks, when something new in the shape of annoyance would be hatched up by the fertile brain of the foreman, and his devices were so numerous and varied, that I could not, for want of space, give you anything like a correct summary of them. I will instance one of them: *On the hottest day during that summer, he caused the steam to be turned on in the shop*, and kept so, during the entire day. I saw the blood gush from the nostrils and mouths of many of the men, as the cold water touched their temples when washing up, preparatory to going to their cells for the noon or evening meals. Understand, the steam in the treeing room in the summer is altogether unnecessary, and only used as a means of punishment, and this course is pursued to show the convicts that they are entirely in the hands of the contractors; and, no matter what task the State makes as the day's work, you must ignore it altogether and do just what the contractors want done. *The convict is never told to do more than the task fixed by the State, but so long as he only does that task, he cannot do it well enough to give satisfaction.*

When I at last

FOUND OUT THE PROPER WAY TO DO THE WORK,

and that I had been instructed wrongly from the first, I felt so hurt about it that I would not do more than the task fixed by the State any way, and hence the punishment. Their method of driving the convicts is to keep up a constant fault-finding with the quality, not with the quantity of each man's work, and when the quantity is satisfactory no fault will be found with the quality. By this system men are driven to the insane asylum. I have seen a man jump from his cell on the third tier, to the floor below, a distance of some twenty-five feet, in an attempt to commit suicide, so as to escape the annoyance and punishment to which he was subjected. It was in consequence of treatment like this, that a convict in Sing Sing, New York, called the warden to the door of his cell and plunged a knife into his heart, some years ago. The man was afterwards hanged for it. And

under the same system a poor devil of a prisoner was shot down in Stillwater, Minn., some two years ago by the deputy.

If you deem it of sufficient interest to inquire into the matter, *you will find a state of affairs existing in the penitentiaries of the United States under the contract system, which for inhumanity and brutality cannot be surpassed by any country in the world.*

Yours truly,

FRANK GRAY.

EDITORIAL.

The following able and appropriate exposition of the question of convict-contract labor appeared, some time since, in

THE PRINCETON REVIEW,

to which we gladly give place. *The Review* says:

"Although the contract is nominally let to the highest bidder, the contractor enjoys a practical monopoly; the very incidents of the contract that are designed to protect the interests of the State virtually render competition impossible. *Contracts for convict labor* are generally limited in duration to a single year, or a short term of years; and, in the economy of the State, all the machinery, tools and stock are to be furnished by the contractor. The outfit of machinery and tools in the prison at the time of offering a new contract to the highest bidder is not the property of the State, but belongs to the contractor for the time being; in this respect, he has an advantage over any competing bidder which is positively decisive. No competitor will incur the expense of equipping the prison work-shop with a new stock of machinery for a short term, and at the same time overbid the contractor in possession. And so it results, that when a contractor

HAS ONCE GAINED A FOOTHOLD

in the prison, he practically maintains it at will, and without any serious competition.

"This virtual absence of competition among bidders accounts, in part, for the fact that the prices at which the State actually farms out its convict labor *rarely exceeds one-half of the real value of that labor*. In the year 1877, the contract prices paid *per diem* for the labor of each convict in several State prisons was as follows: In Massachusetts, 52 cents; in Maryland, 25 cents; in Rhode Island, 40 cents; in New Jersey, 50 cents; at Sing Sing, 38 to 40 cents, and at the Albany penitentiary, 40 to 60 cents. At the same time the market value of free labor in the same handicrafts ranged from \$1.00 upward. The working day lasts from one to two hours longer in prison than in the outer world, and the testimony is full and convincing that the product of an average day's work among convicts is fully equal in quantity and quality, and hence in value, to that of free labor. It will be seen, therefore, that the prices paid to the State for the labor of its prisoners by contract does not average more than one-half of its actual value. Under such a system, it is not surprising that all the prisons in the United States (with very rare exceptions) show an enormous deficit of earnings as compared with expenditures. The

difference between the contract price and the real value of prison labor is in effect a subsidy paid to the contractor out of the public treasury; it represents a net loss to the State which must be made good by taxation. *The people have a right to demand that the State shall realize the full value of its prison labor; and if it is impossible, under the contract system, for the State to gain from such labor more than one-half what it is really worth, that fact alone affords a cogent argument for the*

ABOLITION OF THE SYSTEM.

In France, prison contracts are not let except at the same, or nearly the same, wages as those paid for free labor; but in this country that result has not been accomplished, and has been found practically unattainable under the contract system.

"The injustice to the public of disposing of prison labor at one-half its value is far exceeded by the grievous wrong involved in it to the free laborer. The products of convict labor are not placed upon the market in fair and equal competition with those of free labor; if they were, there could be no just ground of complaint. But the contractor holds the commodities of prison manufacture at a cost to him far less than the cost of production, the difference being a loss to the State, and charged to general taxation; the contractor can sell the commodities at a price less than the cost of production, and still realize a handsome profit. That the profits generally realized by prison contractors are inordinately large, admits of no denial. It is sufficient to refer to the overwhelming evidence on this subject collected in the report made in 1871, by the State commission on prison labor appointed by the Legislature of New York. The evidence is specific, and among many other instances, shows that in one penitentiary the profits of the contractor amounted to 66 per cent. per annum on the capital invested. "In another prison the contractor employed \$35,000 capital, and the net profits were \$22,857." *This outrageous competition of prison labor with free industry is the natural, if not the necessary outgrowth of the prevailing contract system; the public is taxed to enrich the contractor, and the products of prison industry can be put in the market at less than their cost; and thus the tendency, and, so far as it extends, the actual result of the present policy is*

TO CRUSH FREE LABOR AT THE EXPENSE OF THE TREASURY.

"The number of convicts sentenced to hard labor in the United States cannot be less than 50,000; and the effect which such an army of laborers must produce upon the general labor market, is by no means inappreciable. One or two illustrations will serve to show how important a factor prison labor is in general industry; iron axles for carriages and wagons are in universal use, and are one of the very common articles of hardware traffic, yet it is stated that in Auburn prison alone has been manufactured one-fifth of all the iron axles made in the United States; it is estimated that from Sing Sing prison comes one-quarter of all the felt hats, both for men's and women's wear, made in the State of New York. There is no means of determining accurately the total net cost to all the States of the United States incurred in maintaining their State prisons and penitentiaries, but

it must aggregate many million dollars annually. The greater part of this immense burden upon the people is a deficit that results from letting out convict labor for less than its value; and in so far, the proceeds of public taxation are applied to the *wrong and detriment of free industry*.

"Another tendency and result of the contract system which is specially injurious to free industry, is the

UNDUE CONCENTRATION OF CONVICT LABOR

upon certain lines of production. It appears, for instance, from a special report of the New York Superintendent of State prisons, made to the Legislature in 1878, that out of 1,500 convicts at Sing Sing, no less than 900 were engaged in the manufacture of stoves; and that only three kinds of products were manufactured there, under three several contracts. The magnitude of the stove contract has very materially affected the stove manufacturing interest in the State. The labor of convicts ought to be distributed over a wide variety of industrial occupations, so that the effect produced upon the general market shall be diffused as largely as possible, and not press severely on any particular industry.

* * * * *

"THE CONTRACT SYSTEM INTERFERES

practically with the acquisition of a trade by the convict. It is found by experience that a large proportion, which has been estimated as high as eighty per cent. of felon convicts have no trade when committed to prison. At the outset they are of course raw and inefficient workmen, but there is one way in which the contractor can make his men profitable to himself; it is by the most minute subdivision of labor which shall reduce the work of each laborer to a simple operation—an operation so simple that it shall be within the compass of the dullest capacity; and the constant mechanical repetition of which shall make every convict an expert at his special work. The result of this method is in the highest degree injurious to the prisoner in two directions: it reduces the labor to a mere mechanical process which affords no healthy occupation to the mind, and is open to the objections that apply to purely penal labor at the tread-mill, and when the prisoner is finally discharged *the long years of hard labor have yielded him no available or useful skill as a workman.* He has acquired knowledge of one special and minute part of a trade, and that is all; he may have become marvelously adept at rasping the heel of a shoe, but he has been taught nothing else about shoe making and is incompetent to take his seat as a journeyman in any workshop.

* * * In the State of Indiana an attempt has been made to check this tendency of the system by inserting in the contract an express stipulation that the convict shall be taught all the different parts of the trade at which they may be employed."

ED. KEOGH."

THE CHICAGO EVENING JOURNAL,

in an editorial, which appeared some time since, puts this question in

a clear light; and speaks a good word for the convict himself, as having some "rights" which States "are bound to respect":

CONVICT LABOR.

"The employment of convicts is a question that deeply concerns every tax-payer and mechanic in the country, and it is a problem that is now seeking solution at the hands of philanthropists and statesmen. All agree that our penal institutions should be made self-sustaining, if possible, and in the estimation of the tax-payer that is the first and the principal point to be gained. But the mechanics and artisans, the products of whose labor are brought into sharp competition with the products of convict labor, take a different view of the matter, and protest against the use which the State makes of its criminals. They regard it as a great injustice to let the services of convicts by contract to the highest responsible bidder, to be employed in trades in which skilled labor is required, because such contractors are able to undersell the products of those who are legitimately engaged.

It is just at *this point* that the self-interest of the tax-payers and the mechanics comes in conflict, and the law maker is appealed to, to come in and settle the difficulty. Some of the trades unions and other workingmen's associations in Wisconsin have caused a bill to be introduced into the Legislature of that State which requires every article manufactured by the labor of convicts, either in the State prison or out of it, to be properly marked so that the dealer can be "boycotted" who keeps such goods for sale. In Massachusetts,

GOV. BUTLER HAS CALLED SPECIAL ATTENTION

to the question, and urges some action upon it. The following statistics from the reports of the directors of the principal prisons in the State of New York, are instructive, and suggest the importance of the subject:

"On the 30th of September last, there were 1,526 convicts in the prison at Sing Sing. Of these, 900 are employed under a contract with a firm of manufacturers of stoves and hardware, and the State is paid at the rate of fifty-six cents per day for their labor. They work ten hours a day, from April 1st., to October 1st., and eight hours a day during the other half of the year. Three hundred others are employed at boot and shoe making, under a contract with a Massachusetts company at sixty-two cents per day, and 130 are engaged in laundry work for a firm

WHICH PAYS SIXTY CENTS PER, DAY

for each man, their working day being about nine hours in summer, and seven hours and one-half in winter. The result is, that for the last fiscal year ending September 30th, Sing Sing prison earned \$241,321.93, or \$48,194.73 over and above its expenses. The prison at Auburn contained 912 convicts at the date of the last report.

"There are five contracts for their labor; 265 are employed at axle-making, at 55 cents each per day, 210 in the manufacture of hollow-ware, at 55 cents a day, 100 in harness-making, at 50 cents, 100 in shoemaking, at 60 cents, and 65 in the manufacture of collars, at 50 cents. The earnings of Auburn last year were \$120,234.16, or

\$2,692.27 less than the expenses. At Clinton there are 499 convicts, and there is only one contract, under which 450 prisoners are employed in making hats, at 25 cents each per day. The earnings of Clinton were a little over \$60,000 last year, while its expenses were a little over \$100,000. From the three prisons there was a surplus of earnings amounting to something over \$6,000.

Now while the tax-payers of New York are felicitating themselves upon the fact that these 2,937 convicts have been made to earn their own living, and are no longer a burden upon them, the mechanics and

"ARTISANS ARE FEELING GREATLY OUTRAGED

to think that they have been brought into competition with those who work for 65, 56 and 25 cents per day. *They have good reason to protest against a system which makes them compete with worse than "pauper labor."* And so the question of what shall we do with the convict remains without an answer. He cannot be kept in idleness, neither can he be employed in agricultural pursuits for reasons that at once suggest themselves to all. The convicts must be put at work in the mass indoors, so that the chances of escape are reduced to the minimum, and they must either work at and learn a trade or eat their bread in idleness.

While this discussion is going on between the tax-payer on the one side, whose chief thought is to have the prisons made self-sustaining, and the artisan on the other, whose main object is to keep out convict competition from his business, nobody,

"NOT EVEN THE LAW-MAKER, STOPS LONG ENOUGH

to consider the rights of the prisoner. *Everybody seems to be proceeding upon the theory that the convict has no rights which any body is bound to respect.* The dictates of humanity, however, would suggest that the convict should have a right to some percentage of his earnings over and above the cost of his subsistence, so that when his term of service expires he will have a few dollars left to help himself with until he can find some honest employment. As the case now stands, he is

"TURNED LOOSE UPON SOCIETY,

not only branded as an outlaw, but under conditions that almost compel him to steal, pick pockets, or commit burglaries. If the State appropriates to its own benefit all the proceeds of his labor for a term of years, is he not likely to get even with society when he is again turned loose, by committing offenses against the laws? Confinement and hard labor for the benefit of the State do not constitute a reformatory process, but a school in which men are apt to be made harder by what they deem legalized injustice."

—

As it is not the purpose of this Association to take a one-sided and narrow-minded view of this important question, or to shut its eyes to any facts or arguments which seem to make against its avowed objects and the plans and theories by which it seeks to attain its ends,

we give below the letter of Mr. L. D. WHITING, published in *The Chicago Tribune* of September 11th.

The argument of Mr. Whiting goes chiefly to the point, that convict labor employed *directly* by the State—conceding that the State continue to employ convicts to manufacture articles which come in competition with free mechanics and artisans outside—would antagonize free labor, not only as much as under the contract system, but even more.

This point, if well taken—and of that the intelligent reader must judge—only emphasises the opinion generally held by the members of the Convention, to wit:—that relief for manufacturers and workmen is to be found in some other method of employing prisoners, than in making articles and goods which are produced by manufacturers for general sale and commercial distribution.

The Association are so generally agreed upon this point, that Mr. Whiting's letter will only add to the proofs already submitted by the various speakers, and simply afford cumulative evidence, that *relief is not to be found in changing taskmasters, while the convicts perform the same work, and make the same things, which contractors now make, but in some more revolutionary and radical change.*

What that change shall be, is the great question which will engross the attention of this Association. *

MR. WHITING says:

"TISKILWA, Ill., Sept. 9.—[Editor of *The Tribune*.]—At the coming election the following is to be voted up, or voted down, as a part of the Constitution of the State:

Hereafter it shall be unlawful for the Commissioners of any penitentiary, or other reformatory institution in the State of Illinois, to let by contract to any person, or persons, or corporations, the labor of any convict confined in said institution.

"As this proposition involves important consequences it should at once arrest the attention of the people. The argument of its advocates is that prison labor employed under the contract system is by its competition injurious to free labor.

"It is conceded (at least for the present) that prisoners should labor. The change then would be that the labor hereafter should be under State bosses for the State instead of the contractors as now. The State would then have the goods to sell in place of the contractor. The competition would not be lessened unless the State should by its better business management get better prices than do the contractors. As this is absurd, and the probabilities that the State would sell, if it sold at all, at less prices than would the contractors, the evil complained of would be aggravated. So the proposed remedy is no remedy.

"But it is sometimes said that under the State arrangement the business can be more diversified, and therefore less competition for any one trade. This can be done quite as effectually under the contract system. The business can be as much divided and diversified

when let by contract as it can be under State management. So if it be the purpose of the advocates of this constitutional amendment to have the prisoner's labor they gain nothing by substituting State bosses for contractors. Will they not have made their case worse? Contractors now bid against each other (or did until boycotting came in vogue), and thus pay the highest market price for this labor; and to make it profitable they strive to sell as high as possible. It is not certain that the State would be as good a seller. As a rule it would not, and then some farther remedy would be proposed toward the point of less productive labor. Complete idleness is the only effectual remedy, but the labor unions do not propose this absurd idea. As no good is to come to any one by the proposed change let us see if it does not involve evil. Before the present contract system was adopted, and while working under State bosses, there was a large annual loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars, which had to be made good by some taxes. A return to the former system will involve a heavy outlay for machinery and a working capital and an annual deficit to be made good from taxes. If this proposed abolition of the contract system shall be needed for better prison discipline, or the good of the prisoners, then let it be considered, for I hold that prison management should rest mainly on two principles. (1) The good of the prisoners. (2) Economy of management.

"This is not the motive avowed. Crime now involves a fearful cost in its detection and punishment. The proposed change is simply class legislation and without benefit to the class. The general public have rights in this matter as well as the few who complain, and as that few will not be benefited by the change, and the public damaged, the proposed amendment should be rejected.

L. D. WHITING."

EDITORIAL COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE.

This Association desires the passage of this Act, or rather the adoption of this prohibition as a part of the Constitution of each State, as a single step in the right direction, to be followed by successive steps, until the relief desired is actually secured. *This is sufficient for the*

FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF THE STATE.

All other measures and plans for relief can be better secured by ordinary legislation. This view is indicated by the action of the Convention, which provides that "the Executive Committee, either in person or by attorney, shall bring this subject before Congress and the State Legislatures."

AN ANSWER TO THE SOPHISTRIES

BROUGHT OUT DURING THE LATE ELECTION CANVASS IN ILLINOIS.

During the recent canvass, preliminary to the vote on the Anti-Convict-Contract Amendment to the Constitution of Illinois, an

appeal was made to the people, particularly in the rural districts, which seems to have contributed largely to diminish the vote for the Amendment. The indictment against the measure was formulated on the title page, on which, in conspicuous letters, we find: "*The Proposed Constitutional Amendment, a cunningly devised scheme to saddle half a million a year upon the tax-payers, that criminals may live in idleness, and prison officials have soft places, while laboring men foot the bills.*"

This pamphlet, which derived its chief strength from the names of Senators Southworth and Whiting, was spread broadcast through the State, and, though utterly baseless in its assumptions, and conspicuously unfair in its whole treatment of the question before the people, nevertheless carried a pretty large vote adverse to the much needed amendment. The attempt was made to impress the minds of tax-payers and workingmen that some great injustice toward themselves was contemplated.

It was claimed that the tax-payers of the State will have *half a million dollars a year* to pay, if the *contract system* in our prisons be constitutionally forbidden. Though it is not, admit this to be true—and the question is, whether it is more equitable for *four millions of people* to pay their *pro rata* of expense for protection against the criminal class or for

A FEW OF THE LEADING INDUSTRIES

of the State to bear this burden alone? Whether *all the producing classes* of the State should share in this expense equally, or the entire cost of convict support be "*saddled upon*" a *few thousand workers*, whose labor has been depressed by competition with convict labor?

As all classes in the State share equally its protection against the criminal invasion of their rights of person and of property—it is no injustice on the part of the State to ask *all* to contribute to the necessary expense of such defense.

Divide up half a million dollars—the *alleged* amount required to pay for prison support—among four millions of people, and you have one-eighth of a dollar, or less than thirteen cents per annum for each person. Surely this is not a very heavy burden to bear, for the valuable service which the State renders them, in protecting them against convicted criminals!

We have nothing to do here in reviewing the methods by which the State secures, by taxation, the money which it needs to carry on the machinery of government—of which the care of the convicted criminal class constitutes a part. We take it for granted, that, as to taxation, it distributes its burdens as equitably as it can—without fear or favor. We also believe that the wide-spread hostility to the

convict-contract system, which now prevails, is a sign of the awakening conscience of the people on this subject, who see that the burden of criminal support has heretofore,—by the contract system—been most inequitably distributed, and unjustly thrown upon a few of the leading industries of the State, and upon their employees. The recent report of the

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

—from which we elsewhere quote—shows that the effect of convict-contract competition with several important industries in the State has produced results which, when carefully noted and candidly considered, show that these industries really bear, not only the whole burden of convict support, but that, in addition, they are subjected, by competition with convict-contract labor, to heavy, and in some cases, to ruinous losses.

Notice the following facts set forth in that REPORT, showing that manufactured goods have been cheapened in price—involving heavy losses to producers—and that wages have been largely reduced—depriving the free mechanic of the just reward of his skill and toil. Now all this is to be charged to the contract system and to the unequal competition which they have been compelled to meet, in consequence of convict work being thrown upon the market. Preliminary to the facts submitted, the

REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS SAYS:

“In this State, also, there is an element, RESPECTABLE IN NUMBERS, INTELLIGENCE AND WORTH, entirely qualified to speak and to have a hearing upon this subject, who declare that the State is arrayed against them; that instead of making its penal institutions a charge upon the public revenues, and assuming whatever outlay may be necessary as a legitimate part of the cost of government, the policy is, and has been in effect

TO IMPOSE THIS PART OF THE PUBLIC BURDEN

indirectly upon a limited number of the industrious poor. They have more than once asked for legislation to relieve them from the disabilities thus imposed, and to *distribute the cost of prisons, like that of charitable institutions, equitably among the whole people.*”

THE INDUSTRIES WHICH SUFFER

from competition with convict-contract labor, are: Boot and Shoemakers, Coopers, Brick-makers, Chair-makers, Foundrymen, Harness and Collar-makers, Machinists, Marble and Granite workers, Wagon-makers, and Wire and Wire Fence-makers.

The report is too voluminous to be fully copied here, and we refer the reader, who desires to see all the interesting and most convincing particulars bearing on this point, to the report itself. We have gathered up the following facts, which speak for themselves, and show that the industries above named now bear the entire burden of supporting the convicts of the State, not only, but suffer, in the depreciation of the value of the manufactured goods and by the

cutting down of wages, a loss far exceeding the sum paid directly to support the State prisons.

COOPERS.

An extensive manufacturer of cooperage in Chicago says:

"Without a doubt, we are now suffering a decline of at least twenty-five per cent. in the prices of our goods as a result of prison competition. * * * The prison contractors are trying to drive all cooperage manufacture to the wall, and they will succeed unless the contract system is overthrown."

Another extensive manufacturer of cooperage says:

"The competition of prison-made goods in our market has caused such a decline in prices that we estimate present rates to be from TWENTY-FIVE TO FORTY PER CENT."

Still another says:

"The wages which it is possible for journeymen coopers to earn have been steadily reduced until it is almost impossible for him to live,—he is able to earn but little more than A DOLLAR A DAY."

The extent of injury to this industry may be seen from this statement in the BUREAU's report:

"Last year's product of the prison shops was 745,261 packages, while that of all private shops, upon a liberal and legitimate basis of computation, was 354,515. In other words, out of a total sale and consumption of 1,099,776 packages in Chicago, 67.8 PER CENT. was manufactured in PRISONS."

The report adds:

"The simple fact that 67.8 per cent. of the provision cooperage used in Chicago is manufactured in prisons, by contractors who pay no rent, no insurance on buildings, and no tax on realty, and

HIRE MEN AT FROM 45 TO 62½ CENTS A DAY,

renders every other fact here shown as to the decline of the business in Chicago, the falling off in the market price, the reduction of wages, and the consequent reduction of skilled coopers to the rank of day laborers, inevitable, without other demonstration."

BOOTS AND SHOES.

The report of the BUREAU OF STATISTICS also shows that—

"In the boot and shoe factories of Illinois there are only 2,060 employes of all kinds—men, women, and children; while in the prison shops there are 724 male adults, and 159 boys—883 in all—the number of the latter being 42 per cent. of the former. Thus, if it were possible to consider the State as isolated from others, the prison shops would be found to absolutely dominate, if they did not destroy, all private establishments of this character.

"But this State is surrounded by prison shoe factories, employing convicts in the following numbers: In Indiana, 302; Ohio, 66; Michigan, 140; Wisconsin, 420; Iowa, 119; Missouri, 403—1,431 in all. The total number of employes in the shoe factories of those States is 6,854, of which the former number is 20 ÷ per cent. Is it possible to conceive that the local industries in this group of States are not injured by this degree and kind of opposition?

"Moreover, the warden of the New York State prison at Auburn states, in a recent report, that 90 per cent. or nearly a quarter of a million dollars' worth of boots and shoes made in that institution, in nine months, were sold to local dealers in the Western States, and only 19 per cent. in the State of New York."

Another says:

"Prison labor in the manufacture of boots and shoes has depressed the prices of those goods at least twenty per cent."

Another shoe manufacturer says:

"The influence of the present system of prison labor in our judgment is to *cut down the prices of goods, enrich a few contractors, and lower the wages of working-men.*"

The representative of a shoe and slipper factory in Chicago says:

"There has undoubtedly been a decline in prices, owing to convict labor, which I should estimate as *about ten per cent.*"

HARNESS AND SADDLERY.

A manufacturer says:

"Our business has been injured by the convict labor contractors, and the demand for our goods *has fallen off twenty per cent.*"

MARBLE WORKERS.

One of the oldest marble men in Chicago, in reply to the BUREAU's inquiries, answers:

"Prices in my line of business are *lower now than ever before.* They are now where there is hardly a living margin in them. I attribute this decline solely to the competition of prison contractors in our market."

Another operator in marble work says:

"My estimate of the extent of the injury done this market by prison contractors would be, that *they have occasioned a decline of from 30 to 50 per cent.*"

BRICK MAKING.

The president of a brick-making company says:

"The Bridewell authorities always sold their product at from *fifty cents to one dollar below the market price.*"

Another brick manufacturer says:

"Four of the largest orders for pressed brick have gone to the Chester prison contractors, which we would undoubtedly have had were it not for the low price of prison-made brick. We could better have afforded to *pay a thousand dollars in taxes to support that penitentiary* than to have lost this business. We feel that the burden of supporting prisoners should be more evenly distributed."

A manufacturer of

WIRE FENCE

says:

"We regard the influence of prison labor upon free labor as very bad, because it has a tendency to lower wages. The fact that only a comparatively small portion of the goods in our line can be made in prisons is the only thing which enables outside manufacturers to keep in the market. If convict contractors could supply the demand, it would be impossible to compete with them."

WAGON MAKERS.

The following is from a manufacturer whose company has \$650,000 invested in this business:

□ "About one-fourth of the wagons in the West and South are made in penitentiaries. In view of the foregoing, I am convinced that the prison contract system has depressed the demand and the prices of legitimately made goods, and that it has thus compelled employers not only to *reduce the wages of their help to a minimum, but to reduce the number employed at least one-third,* thus engendering strikes and labor troubles which the manufacturer can not remedy while this pernicious system of convict labor exists. To sum up, I would state that I am fully persuaded that convict competition with wood and metal workers in our line deprives the free man of from *20 to 25 per cent.* of his rightful wages, and keeps a corresponding proportion of their number in enforced idleness and want."

An extensive manufacturer in the western part of the State has

"The employment of convict labor in the manufacture of wagons, and the consequent competition arising therefrom, have caused a *depreciation* in the same class of goods made by free labor *of at least ten per cent.*"

A Chicago wagon company, of forty years' standing, states that—

"The competition of prison contractors has occasioned a decline in the prices of our products, *which we estimate at 20 per cent.* It has also weakened the demand for legitimate goods, and these causes have combined to enforce a reduction in wages of *at least 20 per cent.*"

Now when the magnitude of these several industries, the enormous legitimate production, the number of workmen employed, the depreciation of prices, the cutting down of wages and the loss of time are considered, there can not be a question, that the loss to these industries is more—much more—*than half a million dollars a year!*

We submit, therefore, that it is more equitable for the State to raise by taxation the half million dollars, than to force upon these few leading industries the payment of that sum—and submit to additional heavy losses by convict-contract competition besides.

As this Association does not believe in or advocate that the criminal population "*live in idleness*," and have no relations with, or interest in, "prison officials" and their "fat places," we dismiss, without comment, those absurd charges. Convicts must work, and the deficit in any case for the support of the penal system would be small.

ADVANCE CHAPTERS

FROM THE FOURTH BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF LABOR
STATISTICS OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.

This most valuable contribution to the Anti-Convict-Contract literature of the day, kindly forwarded to us by Mr. J. S. LORD, Secretary, has been received, and we find it full of telling facts, statistics and arguments, all going to show both the inexpediency and the wrong of the convict-contract system.

The report is a model of clear and vigorous English, and its array of statistical facts, bearing on this question, and its candid and forcible treatment of the whole subject make it invaluable.

We regret that our limited space prevents our drawing more largely from this report, but we give it what room we have at our disposal, and recommend our readers—who desire to see this subject fully treated—to procure a copy of the report from Secretary LORD, at Springfield, Illinois.

The statistics gathered are carefully tabulated in ELEVEN TABLES, of which we give as specimens, Tables III, X, XI—as illustrating the method adopted by the statistician, and as containing facts most pertinent to our purpose.

TRADES AND INDUSTRIES OF THE UNITED STATES

INJURED OR JEOPARDIZED BY CONVICT-CONTRACT LABOR.

Compiled from the Fourth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the
State of Illinois, by courtesy of J. S. LORD, Esq., Secretary.

CONTRACT PRICES IN THIRTY-ONE PENAL INSTITUTIONS, AND FOR FIFTY-SEVEN SPECIFIED BRANCHES OF INDUSTRY.

INDUSTRIES.	Prisoners Under contract.	Average price per prisoner per day.	Estimated earnings per day.
Agricultural tools, - - - - -	174	50 cts.	\$87 00
Bedsteads, - - - - -	84	50	42 00
Blacksmithing, - - - - -	23	45	10 35
Bolts, - - - - -	50	31.4	15 70
Bolts and nuts, - - - - -	107	74.11	79 30
Bookkeeping, - - - - -	4	45	1 80
Boots and shoes, - - - - -	2,439	51.54	1,257 44
Brickmaking, - - - - -	60	77	46 20
Brooms, - - - - -	81	59.75	48 40
Brushes and wire work, - - - - -	200	26	52 00
Cane seating chairs, - - - - -	116	10	11 60
Cane-seat chairs, - - - - -	26	70	18 20
Carpenters and joiners tools, - - - - -	61	82.5	50 32
Carriage bodies and shafts, - - - - -	105	76	79 80
Chairs, - - - - -	179	59.11	105 81
Chairs and Cradles, - - - - -	162	55	89 10
Chairs and furniture, - - - - -	104	45	46 80
Children's carriages, - - - - -	35	76.76	26 85
Cigars, - - - - -	170	43.8	74 46
Cigars and cigar boxes, - - - - -	55	45.55	25 05
Clothing, - - - - -	40	42.5	17 00
Collars, - - - - -	60	63	37 80
Cooperage, - - - - -	451	61.5	277 59
Cutting and dressing stone, - - - - -	118	53.25	62 83
Dressing granite, - - - - -	67	66.65	44 62
Dressing granite and marble, - - - - -	60	20	12 00
Dressing marble, - - - - -	93	54.5	50 68
Farm implements, - - - - -	120	50	60 00
Foundry, - - - - -	31	45	13 95
Furniture, - - - - -	67	84.4	56 55
Hames and saddlery hardware, - - - - -	114	33.8	38 53
Harness and collars, - - - - -	127	61.7	78 36
Harness and saddlery, - - - - -	203	48.04	97 52
Heelmaking, - - - - -	48	16	7 68
Helpers, - - - - -	24	45	9 80
Hollowware, - - - - -	193	56	108 08
Hollowware and castings, - - - - -	295	64.98	191 54
Hosiery and woolen goods, - - - - -	184	47	86 48
Knitting socks, - - - - -	535	17.6	94 52
Knitting and tailoring, - - - - -	61	55.2	33 67
Laundry, - - - - -	126	60	75 60
Machinists, - - - - -	63	45	28 35
Painters, - - - - -	39	45	17 55
Saddlery hardware, - - - - -	545	57.72	314 58
Saddle-trees, - - - - -	173	43.12	74 61
Sewing machines, - - - - -	50	35	17 50
Shelf hardware, - - - - -	300	48	144 00
Shoemaking, - - - - -	387	42.57	164 75
Shoes, - - - - -	1,140	48.18	554 95
Stoves, - - - - -	1,045	53.4	558 03
Stoves and stove castings, - - - - -	80	75	60 00
Wagons, - - - - -	504	72.33	292 95
Whips and brooms, - - - - -	121	49.5	59 59
Window shade rollers, - - - - -	15	50	7 50
Wire and wire fence, - - - - -	143	81.8	116 97
Wire work, - - - - -	12	49.16	5 90
Wood workers, - - - - -	138	45	62 10
Totals, - - - - -	11,908	51.24	\$6,102 61

Aggregate product per annum, \$1,904,136.

SYSTEMS OF PRISON LABOR

UNDER WHICH CONVICTS ARE EMPLOYED.—By STATES.

STATES AND TERRITORIES.	NUMBER EMPLOYED.					
	Under contract.	Under lease.	Under piece price.	On public account.	In prison duties.	Totals.
UNITED STATES,—Totals	14,939	9,291	2,980	16,679	8,850	52,739
Alabama,	-	863	-	-	36	899
Arkansas,	-	597	-	-	-	597
California,	-	-	769	407	385	1,561
Colorado,	-	-	-	287	147	434
Connecticut,	200	-	60	348	242	850
Delaware,	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida,	-	197	-	-	-	197
Georgia,	-	1,659	-	-	-	1,659
Illinois,	1,873	-	110	340	496	2,819
Indiana,	1,172	-	-	436	106	1,714
Iowa,	318	-	-	350	237	905
Kansas,	245	-	-	932	181	1,358
Kentucky,	-	1,142	-	169	73	1,384
Louisiana,	-	864	-	-	-	864
Maine,	-	-	-	168	9	177
Maryland,	439	-	-	-	83	522
Massachusetts,	649	-	898	876	975	3,398
Michigan,	900	-	-	1,195	532	2,627
Minnesota,	330	-	-	130	65	525
Mississippi,	-	741	-	-	71	812
Missouri,	869	-	-	543	325	1,737
Nebraska,	-	278	-	50	42	370
Nevada,	-	-	-	105	23	128
New Hampshire,	99	-	-	93	28	220
New Jersey,	-	-	625	511	249	1,385
New York,	4,350	-	-	2,255	1,539	8,144
North Carolina,	-	1,085	-	-	-	1,085
Ohio,	1,199	-	463	992	441	3,095
Oregon,	170	-	-	50	63	283
Pennsylvania,	402	-	45	2,698	1,603	4,748
Rhode Island,	122	-	10	465	143	740
South Carolina,	-	526	-	398	21	945
Tennessee,	-	1,339	-	-	-	1,339
Texas,	109	-	-	2,128	155	2,392
Vermont,	70	-	-	84	16	170
Virginia,	808	-	-	-	216	1,024
West Virginia,	215	-	-	-	60	275
Wisconsin,	340	-	-	456	226	1,022
The Territories,	60	-	-	207	62	329

CONVICTS AT WORK IN ILLINOIS.—By INDUSTRIES.

INDUSTRIES.	NUMBER EMPLOYED.			METHOD OF EMPLOYMENT.			
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Under contract.	On public account.	Piece-price plan.	In prison duties.
Baking, etc.,	22	-	22	-	22	-	-
Boots and shoes,	883	-	883	883	-	-	-
Brick making,	60	-	60	60	-	-	-
Broom making,	38	-	38	-	38	-	-
Cane seating chairs,	110	-	110	-	-	110	-
Construction, etc.,	162	-	162	-	162	-	-
Cooperage,	204	-	204	204	-	-	-
Farm and garden,	46	-	46	-	46	-	-
Foundry,	125	-	125	125	-	-	-
Harness and collars,	127	-	127	127	-	-	-
Knitting, etc.,	61	-	61	61	-	-	-
Laundry,	15	-	15	-	15	-	-
Machinists,	42	-	42	-	42	-	-
Prison duties,	407	89	496	-	-	-	496
Stone work,	270	-	270	270	-	-	-
Tailoring,	15	-	15	-	15	-	-
Wire and wire fence,	143	-	143	143	-	-	-
Totals,	2,730	89	2,816	1,873	340	110	496

CONVICT LABOR IN ILLINOIS.

STATE INSTITUTIONS AND EMPLOYMENTS.	PRISON POPULATION.			PRISONERS AT WORK.			PRISONERS IDLE.	METHOD OF EMPLOYMENT.			Contract price per day, cents.
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.		Under contract.	On public account.	Piece price plan.	
<i>Illinois Penitentiary,</i>											
Joliet, - - - - -	1,583	20	1,603	1,543	20	1,563	40	1,304	37	222	--
Boots and shoes, - - - - -				469	--	469	--	499	--	--	62.4
Cooperage, - - - - -				204	--	204	--	204	--	--	58.9
Granite work, - - - - -				67	--	67	--	67	--	--	66.6
Marble work, - - - - -				93	--	93	--	93	--	--	54.5
Stone work, - - - - -				110	--	110	--	110	--	--	54.6
Harness and collars, - - - - -				127	--	127	--	127	--	--	61.7
Knitting and tailoring, - - - - -				61	--	61	--	61	--	--	55.2
Wire and wire fence, - - - - -				143	--	143	--	143	--	--	81.8
Machinists, - - - - -				37	--	37	--	--	37	--	--
Prison duties, - - - - -				202	20	222	--	--	--	222	--
<i>Southern Penitentiary,</i>											
Chester, - - - - -	691	14	705	691	14	705	--	410	155	140	--
Boots and shoes, - - - - -				225	--	225	--	225	--	--	51.
Brick making, - - - - -				60	--	60	--	60	--	--	77.
Foundry, - - - - -				125	--	125	--	125	--	--	55.5
Construction, - - - - -				155	--	155	--	--	155	--	--
Prison duties, - - - - -				126	14	140	--	--	--	140	--
<i>Reform School,</i>											
Pontiac, - - - - -	312	--	312	297	--	297	15	159	103	35	--
Shoemaking, - - - - -				159	--	159	--	159	--	--	18.
Tailoring, - - - - -				15	--	15	--	--	15	--	--
Laundry, - - - - -				15	--	15	--	--	15	--	--
Baking, - - - - -				22	--	22	--	--	22	--	--
Engine room, - - - - -				5	--	5	--	--	5	--	--
Farm and garden, - - - - -				46	--	46	--	--	46	--	--
Prison duties, - - - - -				35	--	35	--	--	--	35	--
Totals, - - - - -	2,586	34	2,620	2,531	34	2,565	55	1,873	295	397	--

ILLINOIS.—LOCAL INSTITUTIONS.

<i>House of Correction,</i>											
Chicago, - - - - -	577	69	646	159	40	199	429	18	7	110	82
Cane-seating chairs, - - - - -				110	--	110	--	--	--	110	--
Improvements, etc., - - - - -				7	--	7	--	--	7	--	--
Prison duties, - - - - -				42	40	82	--	--	--	--	82
<i>House of Correction,</i>											
Peoria, - - - - -	40	15	55	40	15	55	--	--	38	--	17
Brick making in summer, - - - - -				38	--	38	--	--	38	--	--
broom making in winter				2	15	17	--	--	--	--	17
Prison duties, - - - - -				--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Totals, - - - - -	3,203	118	3,321	2,730	89	2,819	429	73	1,873	340	496

CONTENTS OF BUREAU REPORT TABLES.

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The contents of all the tables may be gathered from the following summary, given in the Report:

CONTENTS OF TABLES.

TABLE I shows a total population in 108 penal and reformatory institutions of 57,331. Of this number, 53,158 are males and 4,193 are females. There are 52,739 at work, of whom 48,838 are males and 3,901 are females; leaving 4,592 idle, of whom 3,321 are idle for want of employment, and 1,271 are incapacitated.

The analysis of the methods of employment shows that 14,939 are at work under the contract system, 9,291 are leased out, 2,980 are employed on the piece-price plan, 16,679 on public account, and 8,850 are occupied in prison duties.

The States in which the contract system prevails are Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

In three of these States, however, the contract system has recently been abolished by law, and the practice in those States will become extinct upon the expiration of existing contracts. These are New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. The contract system has also been entirely abolished recently in California and New Jersey, in both of which States the piece-price plan has been substituted. A law was also passed by the last legislature of the State of Michigan, forbidding the contracting of convicts; but it failed of the approval of the Governor upon technical grounds. Thus the States of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and California have arrayed themselves against the system, and four of them are adopting other methods of utilizing the labor of convicts.

The lease system is seen to be still in vogue in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the new State of Nebraska. Eight States have some portion of their convicts at work on the piece-price plan, and two of them their entire prison force; while twenty-seven States have more or less prisoners at work on public account, though none of them have yet made the system universal.

TABLE II exhibits an analysis of the prison work of the country by Industries, showing the number of convicts employed in each of a group of fourteen general lines of productive labor, besides the number engaged in miscellaneous labor and prison duties. This shows a much larger number of convicts engaged in the various forms of boot and shoe manufacture than in any other industry. The whole number thus employed is 7,076, while the manufactures of wearing apparel, furniture and hollow-ware come next in importance in the order given. The kinds of work done throughout the country by convict labor are here fully set forth in detail, and the extent to which each industry is carried on, together with the plan under which it is prosecuted.

TABLE III is a special arrangement of the prison population to show the number employed under each of the four general systems of labor, together with the proportion at work in the manifold duties about the several institutions. The total number thus employed is seen to be 8,850, or 16 per cent. of the whole.

TABLE IV is an exhibit of the prices paid for convicts under the contract system in different States and industries. This table covers the prices paid in thirty-one institutions in eighteen States and Territories; the returns from other States are defective in this regard, and consequently only those institutions appear from which the facts as to prices were obtained.

Convicts here are classified as able-bodied, and as of lighter grade, in order to account for differences in price sometimes reported under the same contract.

This distinction as to the grade of convicts, based on their skill or physical abilities, is not made in all institutions, but in many of the larger ones the two classes are let at two prices, because of the respective value of their labor. There are also different prices paid for the able-bodied, or first-class convicts, by the same contractors bidding them in at different sales. It is the object of this table to show how prices range in the different States, both for the able-bodied and the less efficient convicts, where the two grades are recognized, and for good and bad taken together where they are let in that way. Averages are extended for each industry based upon the respective numbers employed in each at the rates given.

The recapitulation also shows the averages for all convicts for all industries for each State. These, however, can not be regarded of much value, except for States whose prisons all appear in the table.

TABLE V is a counterpart of the foregoing, being a classification by industries, in order to bring out the ruling rates at which convicts are let in like industries, but dif-

ferent States. These industries are grouped under twelve general heads, and the specific branches of manufacture, and the prices paid for convicts in each are given, preserving the reference to States and institutions.

In the succeeding table (VI) an alphabetical arrangement of industries, amplified into fifty-seven specific branches, shows more definitely still just what occupations are reported; the number of convicts in the thirty-one given institutions employed in each, and an average of the various contract prices paid for the service indicated. A column is also extended showing the amount of daily earnings of the given convicts at the average price.

This series of tables referring to contract prices, it will be observed, embraces the record of 11,908 convicts, out of a total employed under contract of 14,939, and not that of the whole number. The presentation is ample, however, to indicate the commercial value which is attached to the labor of convicts in the various States, and the various industries under the contract system.

TABLE VII is a classification of the penal institutions whose statistics enter into this presentation, as to their number, character and population. This table indicates at a glance what institutions from each State are represented, and the recapitulation presents a summary analysis of their relation to State or local government.

TABLE VIII consists of an analysis of those prison industries which may be considered skilled employments, and is succeeded by a corresponding table of the unskilled labor employed in prisons. The specific occupation in each case is given as reported, and the general results shown are that 30,393 convicts are employed in skilled, and 22,346 in unskilled labor.

Following this is TABLE IX, showing the reported occupation of 51,034 convicts prior to incarceration. These occupations are grouped in seven general classes, indicating the various spheres in life the given convicts occupied, upon their own statement, previous to imprisonment. The classification shows the numbers which have come from business, professional, industrial, or other pursuits, and the recapitulation brings out the fact that out of 51,034 convicts, only 13,805 even claim to have been engaged in skilled productive industries while at liberty, and the branches of industry in which they purport to have been engaged are 89 in number.

On the other hand, it appears from preceding tables that of the whole prison population 30,393 are employed in skilled occupations, and the number of these, as shown by the recapitulation of Table II, is clearly reducible to twelve. The facts thus brought out throw some light upon the relative productive capacity of the convicted classes before and after conviction. Assuming that those so reported were actively engaged in the skilled productive industries given, prior to confinement, it appears, first, that only one-fourth (27 per cent.) of the whole number were so employed at most, and, second, that their labors were distributed in eighty-nine directions. As an element affecting industrial competition this number of workers thus distributed could have no influence at all comparable to that of more than twice the number concentrated upon twelve industries, pursued without intermission and upon the factory system, in prisons.

TABLES X and XI are devoted to the statistics of prison work in Illinois alone, and show the number employed in three State institutions, and in the houses of correction at Chicago and Peoria. In regard to other local prisons, there have been found none in which specific industries are carried on other than street cleaning or prison duties. These tables show 1,873 inmates of State institutions at work under the contract system exclusively, which is a greater number thus employed than in any other State except New York, where the system is in process of extinction. These convicts are employed in eight industries, as follows: In the manufacture of boots and shoes, 883; brickmaking, 60; cooperage, 204; hollow-ware, 125; harness and collars, 127; knitting, etc., 61; stone work, 270; wire and wire fence, 143. There are 340 at work for account of the various institutions, 110 at work in Chicago on the piece-price plan, cane-seating chairs, and 496 engaged in prison duties.

This series of tables affords abundant data upon which to judge of the character and extent of prison industries in the State and the United States.

Having presented the whole subject of convict-contract labor fully, the BUREAU Report closes with the the following:

SUMMARY.

From the foregoing review of the various systems of labor in prisons, and the current theories regarding their efficiency and practicability, the following brief deductions may be summarized:

I. That all considerations point to the public account system as embodying the true theory of penal administration, for the reason that this system intrusts every feature of management to the exclusive discretion of the State, and renders possible whatever modifications of policy the public welfare may demand.

II. That while under any circumstances this system guarantees certain disciplinary advantages, its efficiency as a remedy for industrial competition outside the walls depends wholly upon the manner of administering it.

III. That the introduction of the piece-price plan involves contract relations, possibly for a term of years, which in their nature restrain the State from entire freedom of action; but that under its best development the plan will facilitate reformation and reduce competition.

IV. That this plan, like the public account, may be made to perpetuate the evils of the contract system, so far as competition with free industries is concerned, if the foremost object of the directing authorities be to render the institution self-supporting.

V. If, however, the demand for a strictly remunerative system be made subordinate to the higher aims of penal treatment, either the public account or piece-price plans will afford the desired relief from competition, but under the former the opportunities and possibilities are much the greater.

VI. This follows from the fact that the public account system is specially adapted to the fullest application of the three most approved methods of employing convicts, namely: Upon a great diversity of industries. In the manufacture of supplies for State institutions. In manual trades without the use of machinery.

CONCLUSIONS.

These propositions lead to the general conclusion, that, from the standpoint of the labor organizations and their allies, the manufacturers, as regards the three general plans for utilizing the labor of convicts, the contract system is the worst, and the public account system the best; while the piece-price plan is a compromise arrangement, obviating some of the evils of the contract, but incapable of developing some of the best fruits of the public account.

It has been shown how any of these systems may be made equally injurious as a competing agency in the market, if directed solely to the achievement of revenues; but, also, that under the last two, relief is entirely possible, while under the first it is practically impossible.

As between the public account and piece-price plans, the choice must rest with the former; because, although subject to serious abuse, it also opens the way to every reform.

The piece-price plan is, after all, a mere shifting of the evil, rather than a removal of it. It nominally removes the contractor and his foreman, but practically involves a term contract, and permits the presence of an "instructor." In prisons where this experiment has been undertaken as a substitute for the contract system, the late contractors have, in fact, been the only bidders, for the reason that they were already organized within the walls, and owners of the various plants. They could thus make their own terms for the manufactured "piece," as absolutely as they could control bids under the contract, and could equally maintain the volume of their product.

The double consequence of such an attempt to reform the service in New Jersey has been, that the amount of product thrown upon the market has been even greater, and the cost of that product less, than before; while, owing to the low offers made for the finished article, it has been necessary to work the men harder than before in order to maintain the former revenues to the State.

Such difficulties may readily be anticipated in any experimental efforts with a new plan; but unless a judicious subdivision of employments and State ownership of machinery be made features of this system, competition will exist as actively as before, and the workman will still find prison made goods in his market in competing quantities and at competitive prices.

While instances may be cited of corresponding apparent failures of the public account system to afford the relief desired and intended—as in New York, where, in the Auburn prison, the boot and shoe factory was taken up as the contractors left it, and in nine months turned out nearly a quarter of a million dollars worth of goods—yet the fact remains that the system is capable of entirely different direction and results, and the odium of any mal-administration of it rests upon its administrators, and not upon the system. The authority of the prison directory is absolute under this

system, and it is only necessary to provide suitable appropriations in order to make its responsibility for desired results equally exacting.

This constitutes the paramount advantage of the public account over the piece-price plan, that it is relieved from the restraints of contracts of every nature, and is susceptible of any form of development which the State may choose to give it.

This makes it possible to divert prison industries into many channels; to manufacture boots and shoes and woollens and furniture for State use; and to abolish machinery entirely from the prison shops. The first of these proposes such a diffusion of the injuries arising from prison labor as to render them inappreciable; the second makes the State its own producer and consumer, and to that extent removes competition; the third alone is complete in its operation, affording every opportunity desired by the prison reformer, and removing every cause of complaint on the part of the labor reformer.

This alone is possible under a system of exclusive State control, and for this reason that system commends itself above all others to those who suffer from the contract system, and who wish for wise and radical measures of reform.

The solution of the problem is believed to lie in the banishment of power machinery and the employment of convicts at manual occupations under the exclusive direction and management of the State.

To give effect to this or any other reformatory policy it will be necessary, first, to abandon the expectations of making penal institutions self sustaining. As compared with the importance of other objects it is of very small consequence whether the prison revenues defray the prison expenses or not.

The maintenance and management of convicts is as much a public interest to be provided for from the public treasury as charitable institutions or courts of justice or police systems. It is a mere accident of the penal system that some part of the public money invested in it may be recovered by judicious management; and it is an error rife with evil consequences, past and present, that this recovery of the money expended should be made, as it has been for years, a paramount object instead of an incidental feature of penal detention.

The fact remains that all the processes for the repression of crime are alike public interests of the gravest character, deserving first of all whatever expenditures of money public morals and public safety demand. The cost of the maintenance of penitentiaries should especially be accepted as a part of the cost of good government. Appropriations should be made, upon careful estimates, as they are made for charitable institutions, and sufficient in amount to defray whatever expenses the most approved methods of management may involve. Then, whatever earnings may accrue from the wisest direction of the labor of convicts will constitute a legitimate credit to that fund, and reduce to that extent the cost to the State of the protection of society.

But aside from whatever diversity of opinion may be held as to the true penal system, or whatever measures may be considered feasible by the legislature as the wisest first step towards a modification of the present system, it must be conceded that the contract system rests under a pronounced popular disapproval; that it is a bar to any progressive scientific treatment of the criminal classes; that it imposes a special burden, which should be borne by the whole people, upon half a dozen industries, and those who subsist by them; and that under it the State practically barter the birth-right of a portion of its people to industrial prosperity and contentment, for a mere money consideration.

It should not be too much to expect that such a system should be abandoned, or that an enlightened statesmanship, with all modern experience as a guide, and backed by the revenues and intelligence of a great State, should be able to devise a better one."

We must dissent from the conclusions of the BUREAU REPORT on the propriety and practicability of employing large numbers of able-bodied convicts in road-making.

As has been expressed elsewhere in our REPORT, in the words of speakers and writers, we believe that convicts can be properly

UTILIZED IN ROAD-MAKING

without affecting the interests of common free laborers, endangering the morals of any community where they might work, and with a minimum of danger as to their escape. That which *has been* done, without these evils, *can be done* again.

To the several States, the macadamizing of the roads would be one of the greatest and most valuable of improvements. We would, therefore, put *road-making* among the other methods approved by the BUREAU REPORT as a relief from convict-contract labor.

We clip the following from *The International Record of Charities and Corrections*, edited by FREDERICK HOWARD WINES, and published by E. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, New York City, and commend it to our readers, as discussing in a candid and able manner, topics closely allied to the objects of this Association, and an efficient auxiliary of this Association. It is a monthly, and published at \$1.00 per annum.

SALUTATORY.

"THE INTERNATIONAL RECORD aims to fill an unoccupied place in the world. No journal of precisely similar character and scope has ever been published. In a certain sense, its appearance is a sign of the times.

The information desired by the public at large, with reference to the principles and methods of charitable and correctional work, is very much scattered and very inaccessible. Much of it is in public documents. The literature of the subject attracts comparatively slight attention. The aim of the RECORD is to make it more popular; to interest the public in it; to show what progress is making in the struggle for the relief of human suffering and the elevation of the race. The general subject, which will be discussed in its columns, is: Social Evils—Their Causes and Remedy.

THE FIVE GREAT EVILS

with which humanity has to contend, are poverty, ignorance, disease, vice, and crime. The fight against them assumes three forms—namely, prevention, protection, and repression. It is carried on by individuals, by associations, by institutions, by churches, and by governments. All the branches of this one great subject will be treated, by the RECORD, historically, theoretically, and practically, both in their individual and in their social aspects, with special reference to the duties of governments and the suggestions of political economy.

PRISON LABOR.

At a meeting of the Prison Association of New York, December 29th, resolutions were adopted on the subject of labor in prisons, which we reproduce as follows:

"*Resolved*, That the highest test of excellence in any system of convict labor is to be found in the adaptability of that system to promote the end of the convict's reformation.

"*Resolved*, That the contract system, in principle and in practical methods, is inconsistent with those forms of discipline and treatment that are most conducive to the prisoner's reformation, and should therefore be condemned.

"*Resolved*, That the best and most natural method of employing convict labor is in the manufacture of supplies for use in institutions supported by the State, and in such other public work for the use of the State as can be carried on in confinement; and that, so far as such public work can be provided, the State prisoners should be employed on the same under the public account system of labor.

"*Resolved*, That all State prisoners for whom such public work as is mentioned in the last preceding resolution can not be provided, should be employed upon the piece-price plan of labor."

AN UNSOUND CONCLUSION.

Every man who enters a prison and can work in prison was a laborer before he was sent to prison, or he was a drone who lived off other people. If he was the latter, he was the consumer of the products of free labor, and paid nothing for what he used. When he supports himself, he relieves free labor of so much tax as he has laid upon it. That means relief to free labor. *If any convict maintained himself before he went to prison and is made to do it in prison, he is no more competing with free labor than he was with other free labor before he got into prison.* Shall a man who has assailed society be made the guest of society in prison, and a tax put upon other men? —I. V. BAKER, JR.

The position of Mr. Baker, as expressed in the above, which we take the liberty of *italicizing*, seems at first blush, to be very good reasoning, but he LEAVES OUT THE PRIME FACTOR in the case, viz: the *cheapness of convict contract labor*. It is not because the convict works, but because he works for about one-third or one-fourth of the pay required by free labor for proper subsistence, that his labor injuriously competes with free labor. If all the convicts now under the contract system received the same wages which they formerly received (or would have received, working at the same trades) as free citizens, there would be no more injurious competition as prisoners, than as freemen, and Mr. Baker would be *right*; but as that is not the state of facts, he is manifestly *wrong* in his conclusion.

We copy the following from the *Inter-Ocean*:

THE CONVICT LABOR QUESTION.

"To the Editor of THE INTER-OCEAN.

"HUNTER, ILL., Sept. 24.—Will you give in *The Inter-Ocean* both sides of the convict labor question? What class of goods do they manufacture in the prisons? And what per cent. of such goods are manufactured in the prisons of the United States? These are questions farmers are not well posted in, and we shall be pleased to have them discussed in the columns of *The Inter-Ocean*, so that we can vote intelligently on the question.

WILLIAM H. THORNTON.

"Neither the report of the United States Commissioner of Labor nor that of the Bureau of Statistics for the State of New York gives the ratio of convict-manufactured products to those of free labor. Indeed, neither of them has a word to say on the effect of convict

labor on the wage market. All other real or fancied causes of depression are amply treated, but the convict-contract system is not noticed. In most, if not all, of the Southern States convict labor is employed only in the most simple and laborious branches of industry. Prisoners are worked in gangs on the roads, or are employed as wood choppers, and occasionally as miners. When not engaged in work directly under the control of the State, they are

CONTRACTED TO MINE OWNERS,

lumbermen, road builders, etc. The States furnish guards and the contractor food. The convicts are usually barbarously treated, are unproductive to the State, and when released are more criminal, because more barbarous, than when committed to prison.

In nearly all the Northern States the contract system is in full force; the Warden gives annual notice of how many laborers he will have to rent out, and the highest responsible bidder gets them. The work is done inside the prison walls, the State furnishing rooms, and in some cases steam power, as well as convicts. Guards are furnished by the State, and these are supplemented by "shop guards," or overseers, who are paid by the contractors. In all Northern States the convicts are fed and clothed at the public cost, and in nearly all prisons reformatory influences have been brought to bear by the establishment of libraries, and a chaplain or moral instructor is a part of the prison staff.

THE ARTICLES MANUFACTURED

by the convicts are almost innumerable, but are chiefly boots and shoes, furniture, wagons and buggies, cooperage, cigars, and hollow-ware.

The prices paid by the contractors vary from fifteen cents to sixty cents per day, 45 cents being, perhaps, near the average. The percentage of convict labor can be guessed at from the census returns, which show the number of adult males in all the penitentiaries of the United States to have been about 30,000 in 1880. At the same time the number of males of voting age was 11,343,005, but this is to be lessened, so far as industrial efforts are concerned, by 251,698 insane, idiotic, blind, and deaf-mute persons, and by 35,952 male paupers in workhouses, and by, perhaps (for the census bureau confesses its returns incomplete in this branch),

HALF A MILLION BEGGARS, TRAMPS,

and professional vagrants. All told, the working males of the United States were about 10,500,000 at the time of taking the last census. Out of these perhaps 4,000,000 are "laborers" in the sense of manual workmen, so that as 30,000 is to 4,000,000, so is the ratio of convict to free laborers. Of the value of the output of convict labor there is less opportunity of judging. In some of the Northern prisons *very fine work in furniture and carriages* is turned out, and there is no doubt that convict-made boots and shoes find their way into the most fashionable stores. The "both sides of the question" on which our correspondent asks information, can not be discussed in the limits of a newspaper article. They may be thus indicated:

1. The present contract system forces cheap and vile labor into ruinous competition with free labor, which has a temporarily glutted market to face, without the additional glut of 30,000 convicts.

2. It would seem necessary that prisoners should be kept at work, both as a means of punishment and to prevent increased taxation for their maintenance ; but the claim is made that the interests of the millions of workingmen outside of prisons, and guilty of no offense against the laws, are more important than the interests of 30,000 men guilty of crimes."

A GOOD SUGGESTION.

A valued correspondent of Ohio makes the following excellent suggestion in reference to the employment of convicts. He says:

"We are anxious to have this labor question adjusted, and would suggest one way of

EMPLOYING CONVICTS,

which we have not seen in print. The States will have to be at the expense of maintaining the convicts, if they do not work for the State or some one else who will pay the State for their labor. Each county will have *its proportion* to pay.

"We would have each county get its proportion of labor for the amount which it pays for support of convicts, to be employed in making permanent

IMPROVEMENTS ON THE COUNTY ROADS

under proper supervision.

"It is a notorious fact, that the majority of such roads are in the worst condition possible, especially in winter. It is also a fact, that there is as little work done on them as the law will allow.

"The people of the several counties would *get back what they pay* toward the support of convicts in the improvement of their roads, which would not be made in any other way."

Illustrating what the writer says of bad roads: A few winters since the roads about Freeport were *for weeks almost impassable*, and trade in that city nearly suspended, to the great disgust and loss of the merchants and all dealers who relied upon the country for business.

There is no improvement which would do more to develop the country, than the *construction of good roads*.

That convicts can be safely and economically employed in road-making, is demonstrated by the experience of other states and communities. Convicts have long been employed in the British Colonies in road-making. They are thus employed in some of the Southern States. If all the able-bodied convicts of our State prisons should be employed for the next twenty years in constructing macadamized and gravelled roads, on the principle suggested, of giving to each county its *pro rata* of labor according to the amount contributed for convict support—the transition from

QUAGMIRE TO MACADAM

would be so great as to astonish the people benefited, that they had so long endured the nuisance of bad roads.

Temporary and safe quarters could be constructed in different parts of the country, after the manner of railroad-building, mining and lumber camps, which could be safely guarded to prevent the escape of the prisoners.

This out-door life would be more favorable to the health and the reform of the convict, than the massing of men in prison wards and shops. Wearing the prison garb, they could not easily escape, without being recognized and apprehended.

THE PUBLICITY OF WORKING OUTSIDE

would be more dreaded than the privacy and seclusion of prison walls, and would serve as a check to crime. Though the out-door life would be more humane, it would also be more dreaded—as the shame of publicity in penal servitude and convict dress, would be keenly felt by all except the most hardened. Violent and dangerous men might be kept within the walls of the prisons, and occupied in such work as the making and repairing of convict clothing, and in any work which the State required for its own purposes.

THE INTERNATIONAL PENITENTIARY CONGRESS AT ROME, among other things, says:

“The employment of convicts upon public works, in the open air, is admissible in some countries, and should not be regarded as irreconcilable with the prison systems actually in use in different countries.”

The Chicago Tribune of Nov. 12th., 1886, says:

THE ANTI-CONVICT AMENDMENT.

It looks very much as if the anti-convict-labor amendment has been defeated by the farmers, notwithstanding the enormous majority it received in Chicago and the heavy vote for it in the larger cities. But even if it be held that the convict-labor amendment was legally adopted it can not go into full effect for several years. The amendment forbids the letting of convict labor by contract hereafter, but of course it has no effect on the contracts already made, some of which have several years yet to run. The contracts expiring this year cover only the labor of twenty-five men, and the other agreements extend all along the period from 1887 to 1894. Under the amendment 292 convicts can be released from the contract system in one year, 305 in two years, 350 in three years, 472 in six years, and 295 in eight.

The fact that the contracts do not all expire at one time is, perhaps, fortunate, as no one can think the transition from the convict-contract system to some other that shall be deemed better and more equitable, can be suddenly made without preparation. But the State can now *gradually* adopt the new order of things, and no violent change will be required to effect it.

Thus, the convicts will not be unemployed, and the State will not suffer unnecessary financial loss. The present effect of the Constitutional Amendment will be, to prevent any more contracts of convict labor being made, and those in force will soon end.

A PROPOSED PENAL COLONY.

The *Evening Journal* of this city, in its issue of December 2d., 1886, makes a suggestion that is worthy of careful consideration. The proposition, in short, is, that habitual and confirmed criminals — called in penal parlance, “the incorrigibles,” — be sent to Alaska, or some other place designated by the Government, possibly an island in the Pacific, to be acquired for that purpose. It makes a distinction, which has been too much ignored, between those convicts who are reformable and those who are not; and suggests that the latter be sent to a penal colony, where they would be effectually shut out from any further invasion of the rights of society. This would open the way for wiser and more resolute measures for the reform of those who are criminals by accident or peculiar circumstances of temptation and provocation, and have never chosen a criminal course as the means of subsistence.

The dangerous and demoralizing element eliminated from our penal institutions, the comparatively guiltless would escape the vicious influence of “the incorrigibles,” and a treatment for reform could be employed with greater hope of success. Should this plan find favor with the Government, it would, perhaps, simplify the perplexing question: “What should be done with our prison population?” when the contract system, now rendered illegal by the Constitutional Amendment, comes into full operation, upon the termination of existing contracts. As the penal statistics, gathered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois, show that convicts are largely composed of those who have never learned any handicraft or legitimate trade, it would seem that one of the first factors which must enter into any treatment for reform would be to teach the convict a trade, by which, on the expiration of his term of imprisonment, he might support himself, and lead an honest life. In conclusion, the *Journal* says:

“The insular penal colonies of Great Britain, in the South Seas, have been a marvel of civilization. The descendants of the desperate criminals transported to the remote islands of the south temperate zone, form an energetic, progressive, robust, moral race of people, and many of the transported felons themselves became good and useful members of the new society which they entered after their terms of penal labor had expired. Such might, and probably would, be the case, if the United States should establish a penal colony in Alaska, or in some island off the Pacific coast.

“The process of establishing a penal colony in Alaska, or elsewhere, would be a simple one. A law of Congress setting apart a tract of land for that purpose, or to provide for acquiring an island, if it should be thought desirable, would be the first step. An arrangement could then be perfected for receiving, keeping and guarding, in such a colony, prisoners from the various States, as simple as the present system under which convicts in the United States courts are kept in the various State penitentiaries.”

This ASSOCIATION welcomes any suggestions from the PRESS which may contribute to the solution of the problem which it is endeavoring to solve.

The *Chicago Tribune* of December 3d., 1886, referring to the proposed measures of the Legislature representatives of the Labor party on the convict question, says:

"The suggestion that each prisoner should have an opportunity to thoroughly learn a trade must be taken in connection with the suggestion about the "primitive mode of production," and simply means that prison work should be hand-made, so far as practicable. On the supposition that our State will have to make a radically new adjustment of convict labor it may be necessary to adopt this plan. Costly plants for manufacturing might be bad business management at first, at least; but all that is detail, to be decided upon after the most careful investigation. No legislative caucus, whether held in Chicago or Springfield, can expect to solve that problem. It goes to the very core of the whole question of prison management."

The plan of dispensing with the whole system of machine manufacturing, and teaching the convict, instead, to make by hand, with the old-style tools of his craft, whatever he undertakes, has two elements which commend it to special favor: First, It can not interfere with free labor outside; and, second, It gives the convict a trade, which renders him self-supporting on his release.

This obviates, also, the necessity of an expensive plant on the part of the State. The Pennsylvania system of isolation, modified so that small numbers could work together, and the English system of "indeterminate sentences"—the period limited to genuine evidence of reform—might, perhaps, be adopted in connection with the several other methods just referred to, as a partial solution of the question: "What shall be done with our prison population?"

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

UNITED STATES PRISONERS SHOULD BE CONFINED IN UNITED STATES PRISONS, OF WHICH ONE OR MORE SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY BUILT.

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD "SET AN EXAMPLE," IN THE ADAPTATION OF ITS DISCIPLINE TO THE PRISONER'S REFORM.

IT SHOULD ADOPT A PLAN WHICH HAS "DUE REGARD FOR THE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF OUR LABORING CITIZENS, INSTEAD OF SOMETIMES AIDING IN THE OPERATION OF A SYSTEM (THE CONVICT-CONTRACT SYSTEM IS DOUBTLESS INTENDED) WHICH CAUSES AMONG THEM IRRITATION AND DISCONTENT."

It is very gratifying to this Association to find in the President's message, just communicated to the Congress, several recommendations, which it had already resolved to make, on its own responsibility, to that body. It may still be necessary that the Association should be represented at Washington, to present the case before the proper committee, and to secure the support of the members. The President's views, however, will doubtless carry much weight with both of the great political parties; as they are, in no sense, of a partisan character. Following is the portion of the message which relates to this subject:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

FEDERAL PENITENTIARY.

"The conduct of the Department of Justice for the last fiscal year is fully detailed in the report of the Attorney General, and I invite the earnest attention of the Congress to the same, and due consideration of the recommendations therein contained. In the report submitted by this officer to the last session of the Congress, he strongly recommended the erection of a penitentiary for the confinement of prisoners convicted and sentenced in the United States courts, and he repeats the recommendation in his report for the last year. This is a matter of very great importance and should at once receive Congressional action. United States prisoners are now confined in more than thirty different State prisons and penitentiaries situated in every part of the country. They are subjected to nearly as many different modes of treatment and discipline, and are far too much removed from the control and regulation of the Government. So far as they are entitled to humane treatment and opportunity for improvement and reformation, the Government is responsible to them and society that these things are forthcoming. But this duty can scarcely be discharged without more absolute control and discretion than is possible under the present system.

PRISON REFORM.

Many of our good citizens have interested themselves with the most beneficial results on the question of prison reform. The general Government should be in a situation, since there must be United States prisoners, to furnish important aid in this movement, and should be able to illustrate what may be practically done in the direction of this reform, and to present an example in the treatment and improvement of its prisoners worthy of imitation. With prisons under its own control, the Government could deal with the somewhat vexed question of convict labor, so far as its convicts were concerned, according to a plan of its own adoption and with due regard to the rights and interests of our laboring citizens, instead of sometimes aiding in the operation of a system which causes among them irritation and discontent. Upon consideration of this subject it might be thought wise to erect more than one of these institutions, located in such places as would best subserve the purposes of convenience and economy in transportation. The considerable cost of maintaining these convicts, as at present, in State institutions, would be saved by the adoption of the plan proposed, and by employing them in the manufacture of such articles as were needed for use by the Government, quite a large pecuniary benefit would be realized in partial return for our outlay."

APOLOGETIC.

The issue of this Report has been delayed quite beyond the time when the Association had reason to expect it. But, so far as the officers of the Association who have had the matter in hand are concerned, the delay has been unavoidable, and is greatly regretted.

ARIES

